

Tibet:  
China's  
Lost Horizon

# IN THESE TIMES

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PAGE 12

## REAGANOMICS IS DEAD.

Can  
we  
bury  
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us?

pages 6 and 7

Joan Didion  
Miami virtue

PAGE 19

Artist Vito Acconci  
Space exploration

PAGE 20



# Black politics: the issue of harassment

By Salim Muwakkil

When Washington, D.C., Mayor Marion Barry filed a lawsuit this year charging federal prosecutors with misconduct during their ongoing investigation of his administration, several organizations of black elected officials collectively filed a "friend of the court" brief in support of Barry. The suit was ultimately dismissed, but the unprecedented support Barry received revealed a new tactic in the fight against what many contend is an increase in the harassment of black elected officials.

"We're beginning to realize that we must be much more vigilant in monitoring these issues of harassment," said Lezli Baskerville, executive director of the National Black Leadership Roundtable (NBLR), the group that coordinated the support for Barry. Baskerville said the group had been aware of the problems of harassment for many years, but since adequate steps to combat it were never taken the problem has grown. She noted that the NBLR would become more actively involved in the issue and mentioned the group's support of the D.C. mayor as an example.

The Roundtable is not a fly-by-night organization, exploiting charges of racism to validate its own existence. It is an umbrella group of 300 black organizations representing most of the country's black leadership. These organizations undoubtedly gain some benefits by charging that black officials are being harassed, rather than simply being held accountable for unethical or criminal behavior. But NBLR members also realize that complaints of racial harassment are easy to ridicule and could, in some cases, increase their political vulnerability. The increasing level of harassment apparently has prompted the NBLR and other prominent black organizations to act.

"A little more than a century ago black political leadership was widely discredited in a racist campaign of distortion and harassment," noted political analyst Linda Will-

Center for Political Studies, a Washington, D.C.-based think tank that deals with black issues.

**The case for harassment:** Most political pundits, black and white, tend to downplay charges of racial harassment. Clarence Page, a black *Chicago Tribune* columnist and member of the paper's editorial board, wrote an October 4 column that typified this response. Page conceded that he could understand blacks' reluctance to believe charges impugning their political leadership. "After all," he wrote, "character assassination ranks second only to real assassination as a means by which black political empowerment has been kept in check throughout history." But, he added, "when it comes to defending black leaders just because they're black, you might think we would have learned our lesson by now." Page wrote that there's no reason to believe black politicians are inherently more honest than are whites.

But according to a new study released last September during the annual convention of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), black officials are disproportionately harassed. Entitled "Harassment of Black Elected Officials: Ten Years Later," the report was prepared for the Washington, D.C.-based Voter Education and Registration Action, Inc., a non-profit research arm of the CBC. It essentially is a follow-up of a 1977 study that found distinct patterns of harassment of black elected officials and suggested several actions to address the problem.

Among the 1977 report's conclusions was the contention that "the higher the level of office, or the more outspoken the official, or the greater the influence and power—the higher the incidence of harassment. The magnitude can be measured according to the degree of threat."

The earlier report noted that the harassment of black officials occurred at all levels of government, "from the local board of education to the House of Representatives." It was also found throughout the country, in urban areas as well as suburbia, in integrated regions as well as ones that were predominantly black. "It has touched over half of the 16 members of the Congressional Black Caucus, three or four black state executives, dozens of black state legislators, at least 20 black mayors and unknown numbers of other officials."

The new study concluded that not much has changed. "Black politics, that is to say, progressive, change-oriented politics which has as its objective social justice for all Americans—directly challenges those who are the beneficiaries of inequality—will resist any means to deny the basic issue of social justice in order to protect their positions of privilege."

The 1987 report lists several elected officials whose political careers were ruined or at least derailed by allegations that were eventually dropped or found to be erroneous. Former Sen. Edward Brooke (R-MA), former Lt. Govs. Mervyn Dymally of California (who is now a congressman) and George Brown of Colorado, and former Pennsylvania Secretary of State C. Delores Tucker are noted as victims of such campaigns. These three individuals warranted specific mention because of their unique offices. Brooke was the only black senator in post-Reconstruction U.S. history, while Dymally, Brown and Tucker were three of the very rare black officials serving in statewide posts.

In all, 88 black officials are listed in the new report. Included are the charges lodged against them or the particular form of harassment to which they were subjected, and the disposition, thus far, of their cases. In listing the officials, the report noted, "No judgment is rendered with respect to individual cases. Rather, attention is directed to the overall pattern, and to the sociological and ethical issues raised by the treatment accorded a disproportionate number of black citizens who seek to serve the public in an elective capacity."

**Pre-emptive excuses?** Barry's chief complaint was that Joseph E. diGenova, the U.S. attorney investigating his administration, has leaked selective information to the media in an attempt to sully the Washington mayor's image. Although 11 former or current officials in his administration have been convicted on corruption charges, Barry argued that Republican diGenova's intense scrutiny is politically and racially motivated, and his tactics un-



Washington Mayor Marion Barry: Was he harassed?

ethical.

Such tactics are regularly used and have emerged as issues of particular concern, according to the 49-page report. Additional forms of harassment the report lists are: inflammatory coverage of investigations and unfounded accusations of criminal activity; audits and investigations by the Internal Revenue Service, surveillance, burglaries and overt disruptive activity by various intelligence agencies; grand jury investigations; and indictments by criminal justice agencies.

"Other forms of harassment," according to the report, "include smear campaigns involving the propagation of malicious rumors; intimidation of voters and constituents; recall elections; charges of 'reverse discrimination'; defamation of family members, friends, employees and associates; anonymous threats of personal injury or death."

Such a wide scope invites the charge that the report is merely an pre-emptive attempt to excuse any wrongdoing by black officials. Since similar tactics are also used on white officials, why shouldn't blacks be subjected to the same rigorous standards?

The report attempts to answer that question by pointing out that of the 500,000 elected officials in the U.S., 6,400—1.5 percent—are black and that the incidence of black officials in legal difficulties is greatly disproportionate to their numbers in the total population of officeholders. "This fact alone makes reasonable a certain skepticism where allegations of wrongdoing on the part of black officials as a group are concerned."

The study urges blacks to press for penalties when the evidence of wrongdoing by a black official is overwhelming. But when such evidence is lacking, it counsels that a strong defense be mounted on behalf of the official. "The defense of a given official who is under attack may be unpopular, may engender criticism, may even prove to have been misplaced," the study notes. "But blacks and other minorities know from bitter experience the price of less than constant vigilance."

## INSIDE STORY

isms, referring to the tactics used by Southern conservatives to bring the era of Reconstruction to an end.

"One day blacks awakened and found that all of their elected officials had vanished. There is a growing feeling that such a thing could happen again if blacks are not on guard against it," said Williams, who works for the Joint

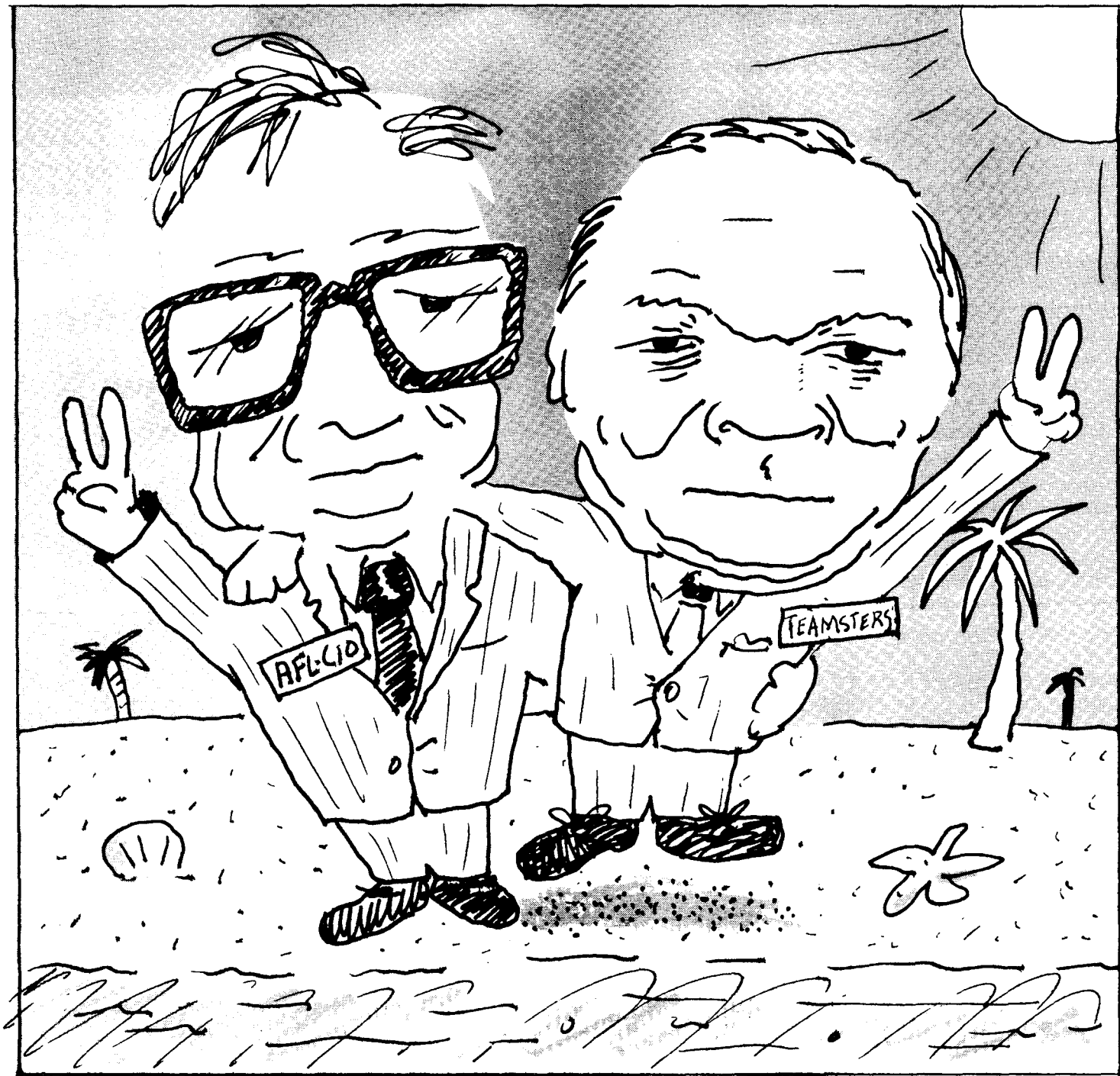
## CONTENTS

Inside Story: Black politicians and harassment .....	2
AFL-CIO welcomes wayward Teamsters home .....	3
In Short .....	4
Fiscal fetishism on Capitol Hill .....	6
The legacy of Reaganism—economic gridlock .....	7
Death squads, Colombian style .....	8
The birth of a Soviet "new left" .....	9
New hope for UNESCO .....	11
Tibet—China's lost horizon .....	12
Editorial .....	14
Dialogue: AIDS, health-care workers and unions .....	15
Sylvia .....	15
Viewpoint: Intellectuals and the escape from reality .....	16
Everybody's Business by David Kotz .....	17
Life in the U.S.: A miniseries that's murder .....	18
In Print: Didion does Miami .....	19
In the Arts: Vito Acconci's art from inner space .....	20
Classifieds/Life in Hell .....	23
Nicaraguan film— <i>Fire from the Mountain</i> .....	24

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## The AFL-CIO's contradictory convention

By David Moberg

MIAMI

**T**HE U.S. LABOR MOVEMENT SUFFERS FROM a contradictory and rarely favorable image in the public mind. Critics simultaneously condemn it as being ineffective and as being too powerful. Unorganized workers often see it as simply unnecessary.

And behind labor's contradictory image lies a contradictory reality. Depleted though its ranks may be, it remains one of the most powerful liberal forces in U.S. politics. But it is slow to respond to shifts in society and plagued with bureaucracy as well as its own hidebound conservatism. It is also frequently more a brake than an accelerator of grassroots social-change movements.

The contradictions at both levels were apparent here last week at the biennial convention of the AFL-CIO. The convention hastily approved the readmission of the Teamsters union, which has shown little or no internal improvement since it was thrown out 30 years ago for being corrupt. Delegates also approved a \$13 million, two-year television advertising campaign to persuade a skeptical public that "America works best when we say, union yes."

At the same time, the convention took yet another small step in shaking off the Cold-War, obsessively anti-communist blinders

that have so distorted its foreign policy and domestic alliances. It voted for the first time to oppose U.S. military aid to the anti-Sandinista contras in Nicaragua—although the resolution was a murky product of backroom negotiations.

The AFL-CIO's clearest indicator of troubles was in its membership figures, down by more than one million in the past four years to 12.7 million. The biggest losses have been in manufacturing. In response, the convention called on individual unions to expand greatly the use of rank-and-file members to assist community-based, full-time union organizers. If utilized widely, such an approach could play a major role in revitalizing the labor movement.

**Teamsters rejoin the team:** The admission of roughly 1.4 million Teamsters, making the union the largest in the AFL-CIO, will boost membership and bring in much-needed dues money. But it comes with a stiff

price—damage to the labor movement's credibility and new strength for the conservative wing of the AFL-CIO.

When Lane Kirkland became president of the AFL-CIO in 1979 he invited all unions into the federation. The Teamster reaffiliation started with a mid-October meeting at a Washington, D.C., restaurant between Teamster President Jackie Presser, who faces trial in February on charges of racketeering and embezzling, and Edward Hanley, president of the Hotel and Restaurant union, itself often accused of harboring criminal influences. Building Trades department head Bob Georgine and Food and Commercial Workers President William Wynn also worked behind the scenes to arrange the deal. Kirkland then called Presser, who told him, "Lane, we want to come home."

The AFL-CIO executive council swiftly and unanimously approved readmission despite a few misgivings. Wearing a blue and gold

**Reuniting with the Teamsters may not help the AFL-CIO in its effort to improve organized labor's image. But the convention's decision to oppose U.S. funding to the contras put the AFL-CIO more in line with U.S. public opinion.**

"AFL-CIO-Teamsters" cap, Presser—showing signs of recent ill-health—was greeted by a standing ovation at the convention.

No conditions were imposed on the Teamsters. Although the Teamsters originally demanded a seat on the Executive Council, that condition had to be dropped. But Presser is virtually certain to get a seat anyway.

The readmission was defended on the grounds that it would increase labor unity, boost effectiveness and end raiding of AFL-CIO unions by Teamsters (or vice versa). Many leaders also argued that the AFL-CIO's image will not suffer greatly, since few people now distinguish the AFL-CIO from the Teamsters. Indeed, some AFL-CIO unions do have had records on corruption and undemocratic practices.

"The pressures of our time and repression of workers makes it urgent we're as united as we can be," Service Employee President John Sweeney said. "You have to look at the institution. Where there's wrongdoing, I assume people have gone through due process. In terms of the size of organization and number of people in leadership, [corruption has] been relatively small. I don't give a damn about the individual [Presser], I think an organization with the best contracts and best organizing should be part of the labor movement."

**The trouble with Teamsters:** But the image of Teamster power that appeals to some in labor is outdated at best. In the past decade the union has repeatedly negotiated concession contracts and has lost a million members despite a very active organizing campaign. It has one of the lowest overall records of union-organizing successes despite concentrating on what are theoretically easier-to-organize small workplaces.

Although Machinist President William Winpisinger had misgivings about the image problems for labor, he said, "I can make a hell of a bank deposit each year with what I save in defending against raiding" by the Teamsters.

But the AFL-CIO mechanisms to prevent competition among unions may not avert a clash between Teamsters and Machinists to reorganize the Coors brewery. Indeed, there's no guarantee Teamsters will abide by no-raiding rules.

The AFL-CIO tried to argue that the Teamsters had been expelled only for a technical failure to submit to the organization's constitution. But the expulsion resolution had stated clearly that the Teamsters union was "dominated, controlled or substantially influenced in the conduct of its affairs by corrupt influences."

"Now it's 30 years later," Teamsters for a Democratic Union organizer Ken Paff said. "Does anyone think it's improved? The AFL-CIO condemns government-controlled unions. What do they say about racket-controlled unions?"

One thing AFL-CIO leaders say is that they don't have the power to intervene in the internal affairs of other unions. But in his keynote address Kirkland argued forcibly, quoting Alexander Solzhenitsyn, that the U.S. labor movement must interfere in internal affairs of other countries because "there are no longer any internal affairs."

Yet U.S. labor leaders are unwilling to speak out forcefully on undemocratic or corrupt practices in the U.S. unions. "It's disas-

Continued on page 10

IN THESE TIMES NOV. 4-10, 1987 3



Joel Bleifuss

## Contra leader accepts amnesty

On October 21 Edgar Chamorro, a former priest and a former director of the contras, accepted amnesty from the Nicaraguan government and returned to Managua. In ending his eight-year exile, Chamorro said he will "work for peace and reconciliation.... It is important for Nicaraguans to go back with an open mind and see if the Sandinistas really mean what they are saying." Asked why he abandoned the contra cause, Chamorro said he did not support "the injustices and atrocities that the forces backed by the U.S. commit." But most of the press reports on Chamorro's decision to accept amnesty and return to Nicaragua overlook the fact that, although he was indeed upset at contra atrocities, Chamorro did not resign from the contras' board of directors. He was fired by the administration's favorite contra frontman Adolfo Calero. In his Sept. 5, 1985, deposition to the International Court of Justice which was hearing the case brought by Nicaragua against the U.S., Chamorro said he was purged from the contra directorate after "aknowledg[ing] to a newspaper reporter that [contra] troops had killed some civilians and executed some prisoners."

## Those double-dealing Reaganauts

The evidence keeps mounting that Ronald Reagan's 1980 campaign cut a deal with Iran to keep the hostages in Tehran and thus ensure President Carter's defeat (see *In These Times*, June 24). Writing in the October 24 *The Nation*, Christopher Hitchens recounts the Iran-contra committee testimony of CIA Director William Casey's faithful henchman Duane "Dewey" Clarridge. Clarridge, who is also the former director of the CIA's war against Nicaragua, told the committee: "Well, I can't prove it, but I think the strategic opening to Iran, the idea, the concept, the desire, began early in this administration, probably going back to 1981, certainly to 1982, in the form of Gen. [Alexander] Haig, Mr. [Robert] McFarlane when he was counselor to the State Department, and Mr. [Michael] Ledeen when he was working there for Mr. McFarlane." Although, as the *Washington Post* reported on Nov. 29, 1986, Secretary of State Haig gave Israel permission to ship \$10 million to \$15 million worth of U.S. arms to Iran in 1981, Clarridge's statement is the first time an administration official has admitted that secret dealings with Iran go back that far. Why would the Reagan administration be doing business with the Iranians at that time, if not as payment for a previous favor?

## Let's make another deal

On August 1, 1986, a group of worried Republican congressmen from the oil-producing states met at the White House with then-National Security Adviser John Poindexter. The \$9.10 per barrel price of oil was undermining their states' formerly money-glutted economies. Their friends and supporters were losing lots of money. That low oil price had been set by Saudi Arabia as a response to the Iran-Iraq war. The lawmakers wondered how the White House could help. Poindexter turned the meeting over to another National Security Council official, Lucian S. Pugliese, who asked, "What would you think of \$18 oil?" According to Patrick J. Sloyan, writing in *The New Republic*, "Three days after the White House meeting, the world price of oil jumped 50 percent, the start of a steady climb to \$18. It was caused by a development that stunned experts on the international oil cartel. At an August 5 OPEC meeting in Geneva, Iran suddenly ended its five-year-old feud with Saudi Arabia. In a compromise that revived the cartel's ability to control prices, Iran agreed to a Saudi plan to share production cutbacks and end the world oil glut.... Iran's decision at Geneva took place on the very same day as the implementation of Reagan's order—relayed by Poindexter—to ship \$6.5 million worth of American-made spare parts for the Khomeini government's Hawk anti-aircraft batteries."

## Land crabs be warned

The government of India has banned the export of frog legs (see *In Short*, Aug. 19). Indian environmentalists successfully demonstrated that the numbers of land crabs and other rice-eating pests were on the rise. They argued that the cost in ruined crops and the increased use of pesticides to compensate for the loss of the pest-eating frogs was greater than \$7.5 million a year.



**Ash trash:** To protest shipments of city-generated hazardous ash to Panama, two Greenpeace climbers scaled the 361-foot-high tower of Philadelphia's City Hall and hung this banner.

## Latin America: a backyard dump for hazardous waste

Panamanian officials, at the urging of the environmental group Greenpeace, have stopped plans to ship Philadelphia's incinerated trash to Bocas del Toro, Panama. Over the next year, 250,000 tons of Philly's trash ash were to have been dumped as landfill into ecologically delicate Panamanian swampland.

"Panama will not accept it for the same reason that six states in the U.S. will not accept it. If it is not good for the United States neither can it be any good for Panama," an official at Panama's Ministry of Health told the *Philadelphia Enquirer*.

Philadelphia's plans to dump in Panama are part of a new trend to export toxic waste to the Third World, a practice environmentalists want stopped. The San Francisco-based Environmental Project on Central America (EPOCA), a group that draws connections between environmental and social issues in Central America, recently issued a report examining this "backyard dumping."

Each year U.S. industry produces 300 million metric tons of hazard-

ous waste—enough to fill a line of railroad cars that would stretch around the world, with several thousand miles to spare, according to Greenpeace. Since the U.S. government outlawed indiscriminate dumping of toxic waste in this country 12 years ago, many dumpsites that didn't meet clean-up and safety requirements closed. The remaining sites faced skyrocketing regulatory costs.

Caribbean and Central American countries are now being targeted as dumpsites because government environmental regulations are lax or non-existent. The EPOCA report cites the region's weak labor and environmental movements, domestic repression, political corruption and indebted economies as reasons why these Third World countries will, for the right price, take U.S. waste.

This practice is perfectly legal. U.S. waste-disposal companies wanting to export their product simply notify the recipient country, acquire a letter of approval and notify the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). "Virtually, that is no regulation," says Jim Vallette of Greenpeace.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed a "cradle-to-grave" hazardous waste pol-

icy. From the time a hazardous waste is generated until its ultimate disposal, EPA regulations say it must be managed and monitored to ensure protection of human health and the environment. But this policy does not apply if the graves are in other countries.

Waste-exporting companies commonly tout the "economic benefits" of hazardous waste to recipient countries. For example, raw Los Angeles sewage sludge that was polluting California's Santa Monica Bay will cause Guatemalan swamps to generate organic fertilizers. In the Bahamas, New York's garbage could serve as the foundation for a tropical resort.

The Centers for Disease Control has warned that the dioxin level in Philadelphia's ash warranted placement in a "properly designed and maintained sanitary landfill." But the ash was destined for road-building through Panama's wetlands and beaches.

Two weeks ago EPA Inspector General John Martin reported that the dioxin in the ash could potentially damage the environment and increase human risk of cancer. He said, "Significant amounts of these substances in the ash will very likely wash directly into the wetlands and aquatic environment, possibly



damaging or killing aquatic life and entering the human food chain."

But the EPA does not officially consider incinerator ash hazardous waste, says Greenpeace's Vallette. "Incinerator ash is specifically exempted to protect the incinerator business."

Environmentalists are quick to

## Coup attempt at University of Wisconsin's Daily Cardinal

The University of Wisconsin at Madison is unique in being home to two competing student newspapers. Students at this university are reminded daily that different political beliefs produce different publications. The left-leaning *Daily Cardinal*, a university daily since 1892, and the right-wing *Badger Herald*, founded in 1969, have competed for 18 years. But a recent drama shifted their battle from ideological ground to power politics.

The *Daily Cardinal* practices advocacy journalism, focusing on issues ignored by the mainstream press. "Our policy shows through in the stories we select," says *Cardinal* editor-in-chief John Keefe. "We aim to make our stories objective, but you'll see more stories about women's rights, homosexuals and minorities in the *Cardinal*. Our goal is to be progressive."

The publisher of the *Cardinal's* competitor, the *Badger Herald's* Richard Ausman, rejects the *Cardinal's* style of journalism. "No school of journalism in the country teaches that approach," says Ausman. Not content to run an opposition paper, Ausman sought to eliminate his competitor and silence its left-wing views.

## Stop-GAP measure fails

WASHINGTON, D.C.—A federal judge last week quashed a Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) attempt to make a public-interest group finger informants who supplied evidence of alleged incompetence and safety defects at a Texas nuclear power plant.

U.S. District Court Judge Thomas F. Hogan said that by slapping the Government Accountability Project with a subpoena, the NRC violated the group's First Amendment right of association. The judge said the NRC also violated the attorney-client privilege of a GAP lawyer. Hogan faulted the NRC for "throwing down the gauntlet" and recommended that the government pursue other, less obtrusive, means of obtaining information.

The NRC, backed by the Justice Department, had demanded that GAP lawyer Billie P. Garde divulge the identities of 56 whistle-blowers—plant workers and NRC employees—who came to GAP with 500 alle-

draw parallels between toxic-waste exportation and the long-held practice of U.S. pesticide dumping in foreign countries. When labor activists and environmentalists succeeded in getting the EPA to ban highly dangerous pesticides in the U.S., manufacturers simply exported them to the Third World. To

He nearly succeeded—and thanks to the *Cardinal's* own business structure. The authority to fire *Cardinal* staff members is vested in the five student seats on the Cardinal Board of Control. Last school year, three of Ausman's allies were elected to that board.

Last March, at the Ausman-controlled board's behest, the *Badger Herald* publisher along with several of his staff members and political allies entered the *Daily Cardinal's* office and announced that they were taking over the left-wing paper. The board accompanied this action by firing the *Cardinal's* business manager and editor-in-chief, citing "financial mismanagement" and "detrimental editorial policies."

*Cardinal* staff members unanimously declared their opposition to both the methods and motives of the three hostile board members. "The *Cardinal* was not in financial ruin," says fired *Cardinal* editor John Keefe. "It is blatantly obvious that Ausman benefits politically by squelching the left wing on campus and he benefits financially by getting rid of his competition for campus advertising. Putting frosting on it is a bunch of propaganda. The intentions are clear."

Acting with its attorney, the *Cardinal* staff pointed out procedural errors in the board's decision. One voting board member supportive of the takeover quickly resigned and the *Cardinal* editor and business manager retained their positions.

But Ausman wasn't through. He

prevent a repeat of such regulatory side-stepping, EPOCA calls for greater international collaboration among environmentalists. The report concludes, "We must not allow hazardous waste producers to follow the lead of pesticide companies in exporting their poisons."

—Joan McGrath

then formed a new student political party—the Merge Party. The Merge Party intended to run candidates in the *Cardinal's* board elections which they assumed would be held with this year's October 11 student government elections. But to prevent the possibility of another takeover attempt the *Cardinal* insisted that its board of control elections be non-partisan.

Steve Marmel, a conservative *Herald* columnist and Merge Party president, used his authority as co-president of the university's student government to threaten to discontinue student government advertising in the *Cardinal* if the *Cardinal* did not hold partisan elections. When the *Cardinal* did not relent he ordered an ad boycott. Marmel denied that his actions were intended to help Ausman's Merge Party take over the paper.

Finally, last month the *Cardinal* managed to protect itself from a hostile takeover. The old *Cardinal* corporation agreed to transfer its assets and liabilities to a new corporation. The articles of incorporation were restructured so that the *Cardinal* was no longer vulnerable to takeover efforts.

Steve Marmel stopped the ad boycott and wrote a *Herald* column in which he distanced himself from the takeover attempt. Ausman, when asked to comment on the *Cardinal's* reorganization said only, "It's over. I wish them well."

—Catherine Capellaro and Michael Leon

said, because that would leave workers "vulnerable to reprisal by the utility and the NRC."

In his nine-page opinion refusing to enforce the subpoena, Hogan said that he was "not much impressed by the government's argument that employees should not worry because federal law...prohibits retaliation against whistle-blowers.... It is not unreasonable to infer from the fact that these whistle-blowers have gone to GAP that they do not want their identities disclosed to the government.... The NRC cannot cast with such a wide net when constitutional freedoms are at stake."

Graham Painter, spokesman for the utility, lamented the decision and accused GAP of "trying to shut down the plant."

GAP's Garde, on the other hand, characterized the whistle-blowing workers as "the equivalent of the canaries that mineworkers took with them into the mines. They are warning us of dangers that are unseen and unheard by the rest of the workforce, or by the management at the top of the mine."

—Michael Phillips

## Community chest

Rep. Donald "Buz" Lukens (R-OH) is a man with a mission. He wants to send 100 sets of bilingual Monopoly games to Nicaraguan refugees in Honduras. According to Adam Condo of the *Cincinnati Post*, Lukens had originally arranged for Monopoly's manufacturer, Parker Brothers, to donate the games but the company changed its decision. "We don't want to get involved with anything that has political overtones," said company spokeswoman Patricia McGovern. Lukens will now raise money for the games himself. "Americans begin learning capitalism as children by playing Monopoly," said the congressman. "A great way to start teaching the people of Central America about free enterprise is to create interest in playing Monopoly." Lukens' press spokesman Bill Jarrell assured the public that none of these games would be going to the contras. "I don't think it would be good for the public to think that the contras were sitting in the jungles playing Monopoly."

## Switching on Star Wars

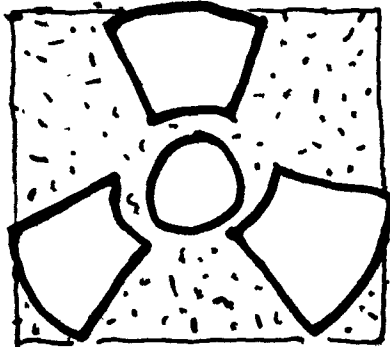
In Huntsville, Ala., the U.S. Army Strategic Defense Command is busy getting the NDEW XRL off the ground. That's the military acronym for Nuclear Directed Energy Weapons X-ray Laser, a space-based laser weapon that is "driven" with a nuclear explosion. Theoretically, it will be used in the Star Wars program to destroy incoming Soviet missiles once they have left the Earth's atmosphere and before they go back in. More plausibly, the X-ray laser is meant to be used as an anti-satellite weapon, according to Steven Aftergood, director of Los Angeles-based Committee to Bridge the Gap. The first commercial contract for the preliminary development of this controversial nuclear weapon went to Martin-Marietta Corp. last spring. The government is paying Martin-Marietta \$5.7 million to help build the space platform for the weapon and to develop the targeting system for the X-ray laser. Says Aftergood, "The X-ray laser is particularly pernicious because it represents a new generation of 'advanced' nuclear weapons and consequently inhibits the prospects for an end of nuclear testing."

## Will this pork barrel blast?

Roy D. Woodruff, former associate director for defense systems at the University of California's Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, resigned quietly last April. But the *Los Angeles Times* recently reported that Woodruff, in his resignation letter to University of California President David Gardner, said he was leaving his position because Edward Teller and Lowell Wood, two leading advocates of the X-ray laser development, had conveyed "overly optimistic, technically incorrect statements [about the X-ray laser] to the nation's highest policy-makers." Woodruff, who was the director of nuclear X-ray laser research, further wrote that Livermore Director Roger E. Batzel was fully aware that Teller—the father of the H-bomb—was offering inaccurate information, but refused to send corrections or to allow Woodruff to do so. Woodruff's resignation letter came to light after a group critical of the Star Wars program, the Southern California Federation of Scientists, received a copy from an anonymous source. Federation member Robert Nelson, a senior scientist at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, is calling for an independent investigation, saying, "Technically incorrect' is just a buzzword for fraud." And Rep. George Brown Jr. (D-CA) is promising that Congress will look into the charges. The X-ray laser is the cornerstone of the administration's Star Wars policy. As Steven Aftergood of the Committee to Bridge the Gap put it, "The fact that the integrity of the X-ray laser is now in doubt calls into question the foundations of the whole Star Wars program."

## That'll teach those bleeding hearts

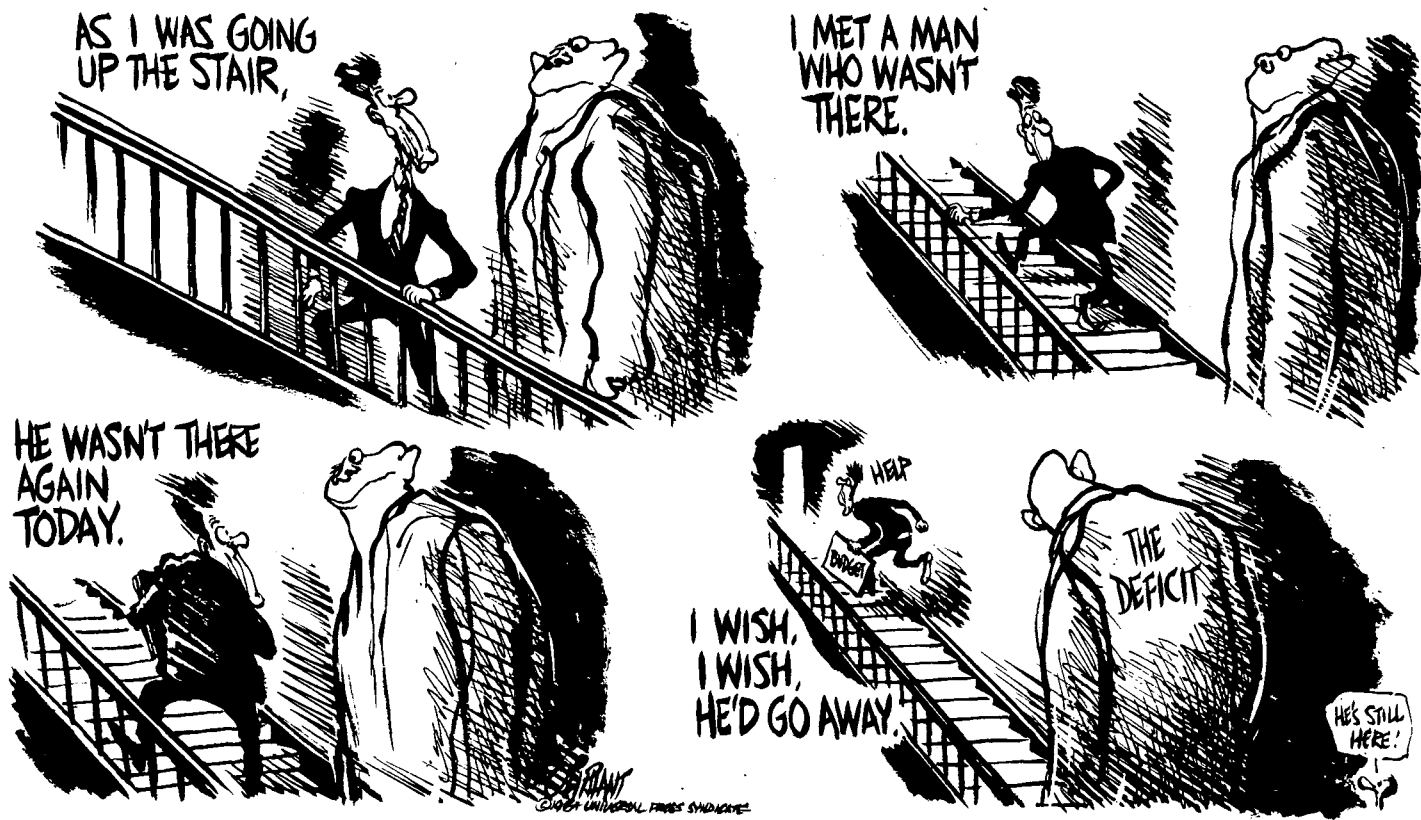
In September the aerospace company TRW pleaded guilty to overcharging the U.S. government by \$17 million. Now this military contractor is seeking to mend its felonious ways, reports the *Los Angeles Times*. TRW is no longer allowing its employees to participate in blood drives at work because the company does not want to have to bill the government for the lost job hours. This is really big of TRW, since Pentagon regulations expressly allow the time lost by blood drives to be passed on as overhead costs.



gations of safety violations at the South Texas Nuclear Plant near Houston. It also called for Garde to turn over "all allegations you have received concerning the safety of the South Texas project" and "any records or other documents in your possession...concerning such allegations."

Federal law requires the NRC to investigate safety violations and ensure the safe operations of the nation's nuclear power plants. Garde said the workers came to GAP after "getting nowhere" with complaints to proper government authorities and Houston Lighting and Power Co., the utility preparing to generate electricity at the plant. GAP refused to "name names," she





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By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

**In the wake of the stock market crash, the Reagan administration and Congress are meeting to cut the federal deficit by at least \$23 billion. Where do they get the \$23 billion figure?**

It goes back to the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act. Passed in 1985, it was designed to force Congress to move toward a balanced budget by 1991. In 1986 the law was thrown out by the Supreme Court because it eliminated the role of the Executive Branch in enacting a budget. Last September Congress revised the

## THE BUDGET

law, placing the final authority for setting the process in motion in the hands of the president rather than the General Accounting Office. At the same time Congress significantly reduced the targets of the original law, postponing a balanced budget to 1993 and raising the target for fiscal year 1988 by about \$36 billion. The result was that Congress had to reduce their prospective budget by \$23 billion rather than \$59 billion to meet the new Gramm-Rudman-Hollings guidelines.

**Would these cuts take place automatically if Congress did not reach the target figure in its budget?**

Yes. Congress had until October 20 to cut the \$23 billion. When it did not, the president set Gramm-Rudman-Hollings into motion. If Congress and Ronald Reagan cannot reach an agreement by November 20, the cuts decreed by the law become permanent. These will consist of an 8.5 percent across-the-board cut in "discretionary" social services like school-lunch programs and urban development as well as a 10.5 percent cut in military spending, with military personnel exempted.

**Why don't the Reagan administration and Congress simply accept these cuts and begin worrying about fiscal year 1989?**

Conservatives in Congress don't like military spending cuts and liberals oppose social-

service cuts. Their solution was to temper the spending cuts with revenue increases. Until the October 19 crash the Reagan administration was so opposed to tax increases that it was ready to accept Gramm-Rudman-Hollings' automatic cuts.

**What did the administration have against tax increases?**

They didn't like them for political reasons. Since 1978, the year that Proposition 13 won in California, Republicans have been winning elections as the tax-cutting party. And any politician that has bucked the tide—like Walter Mondale in 1984—has been destroyed. Conservatives argued that by acceding to the tax increases, Reagan, in *Human Events'* words, would be "nuking the Republicans' single most potent political issue."

**Why did Reagan change his mind?**

Mainly because after the stock market crash he was under intense pressure to do so not only from Wall Street but also from the two Bakers, Treasury Secretary James and Chief of Staff Howard.

**Why has the stock market crash made tax increases more urgent?**

Because they are important symbolically. In fact, Wall Street doesn't care whether the administration cuts \$23 billion through tax increases or through spending cuts. But most budget analysts believe that if Congress is going to continue cutting the budget deficit after this year it will have to resort to tax increases. Social Security and other entitlement programs cannot be cut without risking an even greater political upheaval. It's far easier to block increases in the military budget than to reduce it. Much of the existing budget consists of weapons that Congress has already committed itself to and military personnel costs. And after six years of reducing social spending there is not

much more that can be cut. To Wall Street this means that if the president can't agree on a paltry \$12 billion tax increase, then it is unlikely he will be able to continue reducing the budget deficit. They wanted a sign of commitment from him, and agreeing to the \$12 billion would be one.

**What, then, is the significance of these meetings between Congress and the president?**

They, too, are largely symbolic. Since the deficit would have been cut anyway by Gramm-Rudman-Hollings. Congress and the president are merely changing the *composition* of the deficit-reduction package.

**So a \$12 billion tax increase will have no effect on the economy?**

It will have a slight effect, but you have to remember that \$12 billion is barely 1 percent of the federal budget and only 7 percent of the deficit projected for 1988. It cannot have a critical effect either in depressing consumer demand or in reducing the deficit. It merely indicates to Wall Street a commitment to future reductions. This is important because investors base their decisions on what they believe to be trends. If they think that budget deficits will continue to decline, they will be more likely to invest, because lower budget deficits will mean lower real interest rates.

**Will Ronald Reagan and Congress find it easy to reach agreement on what kind of tax increases should be enacted?**

If the president and congressional conservatives are forced to propose higher taxes, they prefer raising user fees on public parks or instituting an oil-import fee, which will win votes in the Southwest. On the other hand, the Democratic-dominated House Budget Committee passed \$12 billion of tax increases aimed at the idle rich. For instance,

the House proposal would penalize corporate raiders by reducing the amount of interest they could deduct, and it would eliminate homeowner deductions on home mortgages exceeding \$1 million. The administration recently indicated that it won't accept the tax penalty on corporate raiders.

**Will there be any significant differences over how to cut social spending?**

They will differ over how much to reduce particular programs, not whether to eliminate a program or a weapons system. According to Gordon Adams, director of the Defense Budget Project, the Pentagon will absorb reductions by "stretching out" the production time of weapons systems.

**Should Congress try to eliminate the deficit entirely?**

Congress is caught in a calculus of mitigating circumstances. There is evidence that rising budget deficits have forced up real interest rates—that is, the rate of interest minus inflation. Insofar as rising interest rates discourage investment, rising budget deficits can trigger a recession. But a large tax increase or budget cut can also bring on a recession by depressing demand. Therefore, Congress must settle on a program of gradual reductions, as it has.

**But if Congress can't do much more than it is on the budget deficit, and if what it is doing is largely symbolic, does that mean Congress can't do much to affect the causes of the stock market crash?**

Within the range of remedies presently contemplated, that is true. To see the budget deficit not merely as the precipitating but underlying cause of the stock market crash is to indulge in a kind of fiscal fetishism, assigning to budget deficits or money-supply growth magical powers over the perturbations of the world economy. If one wants to understand the stock market crash, one should not look at Washington but at the investment practices of American, Western European and Japanese corporate managers and bankers over the last decade. In all these countries, but in Japan and the U.S. in particular, capital has been diverted from productive domestic uses to speculation—to what economist Robert Reich calls "paper entrepreneurialism." While the productive sectors of the economy have stagnated, stock prices and real estate prices have soared. If Congress needs to do anything, it needs to return to the discussion of industrial policy that it abandoned after the 1982-83 recession.

**Is that likely?**

If Congress does anything, it will move deeper into this kind of fiscal fetishism. Hearings will be held on "program trading." Pressure will mount for cutting entitlement programs and for letting the trade bills that the House and Senate passed last summer die in conference.

**But won't debate among the presidential candidates raise underlying issues about the crash?**

Not likely. Republicans are torn between Rep. Jack Kemp's supply-side nostrums—Kemp's response to the stock market crash was to propose cutting capital gains taxes—and Sen. Robert Dole's old-time medicine of cutting spending and raising taxes. And while some of the Democrats have thought about industrial policy, they don't want their proposals to become the subject of national debate. They prefer to let the Republicans twist in the wind. □



By Richard B. DuBoff

**M**AKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT: THE CRASH of '87 is one of historic dimensions, in some respects already the worst in U.S. history. The loss in stock values in two days—October 16 and 19—was 26.2 percent by the Dow Jones average of 30 blue-chip industrials, 24.6 by the broader-based Standard and Poor's 500.

By comparison, the two-day fall on October 28 and 29, 1929, took the Dow down 23 percent and the *New York Times* 50 stock average 21.3 percent. Only the decline from the bull-market high to the first-stage low

## ECONOMICS

was worse in 1929, and not by much: from the peak of the Roaring '20s bull market on Sept. 3, 1929, to that October 29, the drop was 35 to 40 percent, depending on the index; from this year's August 25 peak to October 19, the market fell 33 to 36 percent.

Panics always break out after the market value of corporate stocks has been pushed to unreasonably high levels by people convinced that a "new era" of prosperity has arrived and that business-cycle instability is now a relic of history. When such euphoria reigns, all it takes is a pin-prick to burst the "bubble." It may come from a relatively trivial event or public utterance, but it comes because the bubble rests on a base of spreading economic weakness.

Several key events helped precipitate the panic (see *In These Times*, Oct. 28). Just before October 19 Treasury Secretary James Baker scolded the West Germans for not lowering their interest rates, and new monthly figures revealed that the U.S. trade deficit was as bad as ever. These events seemed to indicate a complete loss of momentum toward international economic cooperation and a stable foreign exchange market—but in a less speculative world their impact would have been minor.

**The key statistic was the spread:** With a renewed rise in interest rates, bonds were looking like a much more attractive outlet for one's cash than stocks, especially after a feverish bull market had driven share price-to-earnings ratios to nearly triple their 1980-81 levels. This was far out of line with the underlying productivity of the economy, which has advanced slowly during the Reagan years.

By another measure, the bull market of August 1982 to August 1987 more than tripled the value of shares on the New York Stock Exchange during a period when real GNP, industrial production and consumer spending were rising 20 to 26 percent. The huge escalation of private debt since 1979-80, both corporate and household, made the overall situation even shakier: the first slowdown in the economy could reduce incomes enough to increase the burden of interest and amortization charges—the first stage of financial instability, followed by possible bankruptcies.

With imbalances like these, the possibilities for a massive financial shakeout rise dramatically. And whenever seismic faults open up in the financial structure—once such "earthquakes" occur, as the November 2 *Business Week* calls them—nothing remains the same. The idea that crashes like 1929 and 1987 can be reasonably well isolated from the real economy of production and employment if only sound policies are followed is fraught with delusion.

# The Dow of Fashion



## Nowhere to turn: Reaganomics leaves the economy in gridlock

Yet this is exactly what Americans are beginning to hear from some mainstream observers. "Unlike the 1929 case," writes the *New York Times*' Flora Lewis, "there is an international pool of experts who know quite well what governments must do." The president-elect of the American Economic Association, sounding a theme that will probably become a chorus among economists, says that "there is hope," if only the U.S. follows the right mix of monetary and fiscal policy. And a Philadelphia-area economist states that "what everybody knows just isn't so—the stock market did not cause the Great Depression of the '30s...only inept government policy can accomplish that outcome." In other words, there is no reason for things to get worse, because in 1987 economists know what to do about them.

It is essential to understand why this is a dangerous assumption, even though macroeconomic knowledge is far superior to what it was 58 years ago.

First, at present economists do *not* know what to do. For this Americans can thank Ronald Reagan. He has created a policy gridlock that a representative group of economists would have been unable to design 10 years ago even if offered a multimillion-dollar prize. The U.S. faces a situation in which any fiscal or monetary move is likely to be wrong. In the short run, it makes sense to lower interest rates and increase the money supply, as the Federal Reserve did during the week of October 19. But this runs the risk of depreciating the dollar, provoking a flight of foreign capital and aggravating inflation. Raising interest rates might be even worse, particularly because of the severe blows it would deal to residential housing and business investment.

**Fiscal policy?** With the economy possibly weakening, a sharp reduction in federal budget deficits would further depress economic activity, dragging down both household spending and investment. But in-

creasing the deficits, the recipe for fighting a recession, would inflict psychological damage on the world's financial markets at a moment when they hardly need more of it. It would fuel the belief in financial markets that Reagan's economic policies are simply unsustainable.

Second, even if economic advisers "knew" what to do, it is not at all certain that a well-crafted economic policy will work. In theory, the worst calamities of 1931 and 1932 can be avoided—the run on banks and the contraction of the money supply—but when panic is in the air nothing guarantees that the most rational policies will be productive. They could be swamped by those negative expectations and fears John Maynard Keynes warned about. Banks, for example, can make credit available, but who will borrow when

**In the wake of the crash, the U.S. faces a situation in which any fiscal or monetary move is likely to be wrong. Economists simply don't know what to do at this time. And for this Americans can thank none other than Ronald Reagan.**

doomsday seems near?

And for that matter, what makes anybody so sure that "rational" economic policies will be attempted, even under the most dire circumstances? In a rare show of consensus, the vast majority of economists agreed with then-presidential candidate George Bush in 1980: Reaganomics was "voodoo economics," with its Proposition 13-style assault on the

ability of the federal government to raise revenue. But Reaganomics was nonetheless carried out, with the perverse effects foreseen by so many.

The ultimate lesson could not be clearer: Politics dominates economics, and the '80s have been no different. The revanchism of right-wing politics has been accompanied by unrestrained and openly promoted greed on Wall Street. Both expanded to enormous proportions because the American political establishment, including the media and a substantial segment of the Democratic Party, worked hard to bestow an aura of legitimacy upon Ronald Reagan.

They acted as though they had to prove to the world that, no, it really wasn't true that the The World's Greatest Democracy could elect to the presidency a staggeringly ignorant, anti-intellectual, right-wing nut. Just as they worked to project an image of political respectability for Reagan, so they collaborated in overselling "the longest peace-time expansion in our history," undoubtedly believing they would personally profit from it as well.

One more message is clear: There is little that can be done to stop the panic until it runs its course. The point is to prevent these crises from breaking out, because once they do it is already too late in most important respects. If the U.S. avoids another 1929-33, it will be because of the institutions put in place by the New Deal and enlarged by successive administrations: federal deposit insurance, Social Security and all the other regulatory and welfare-state measures. Reagan has been trying hard to destroy these, but they are our best hope.

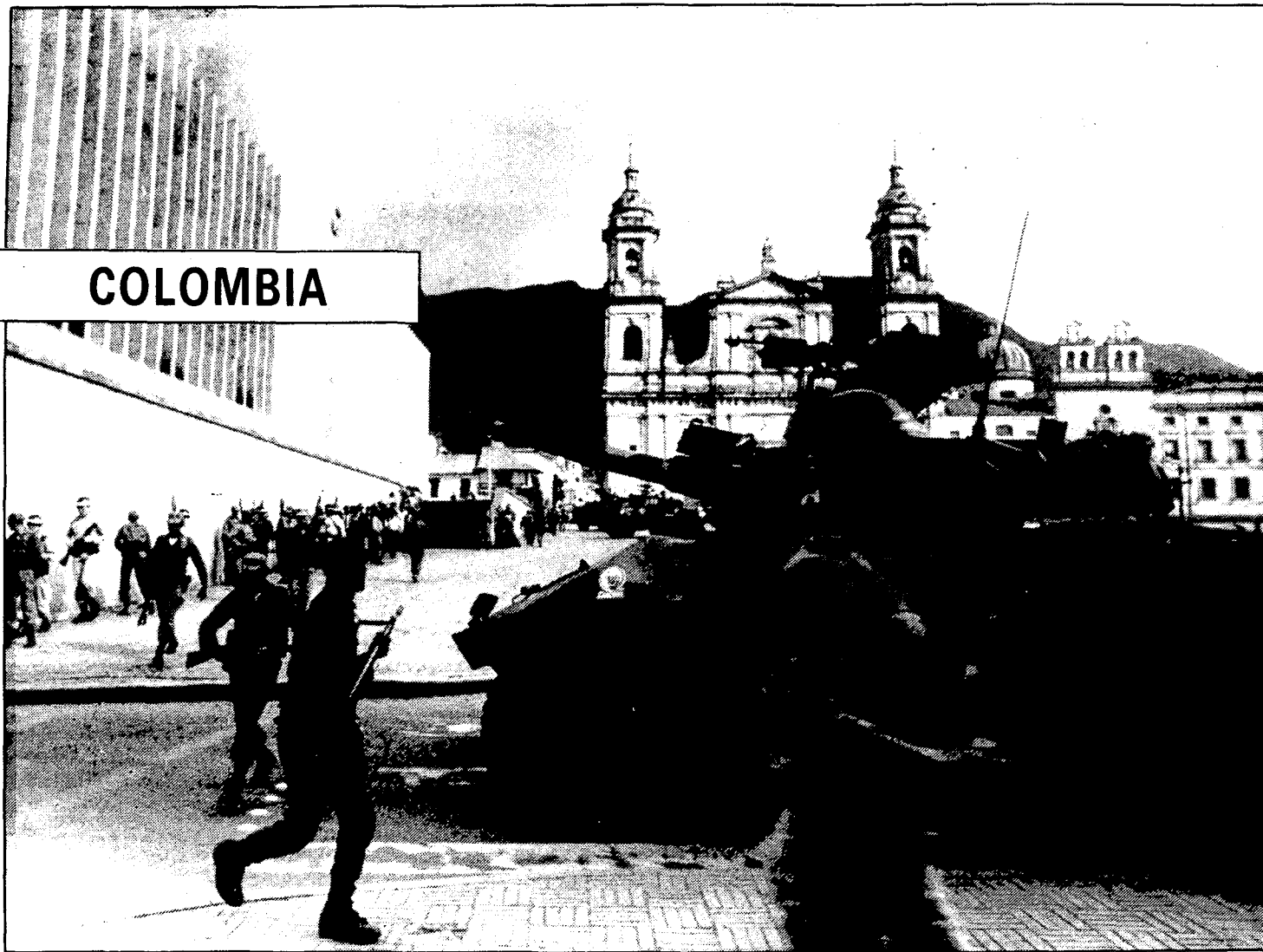
It is a message the left should be screaming at the top of its lungs to anyone who will listen, since those ranks may soon grow substantially. □

Richard B. DuBoff teaches macroeconomics and economic history at Bryn Mawr College.

IN THESE TIMES NOV. 4-10, 1987 7



## COLOMBIA



Bogotá's Palace of Justice during a takeover by rebels in 1985. Today the palace symbolizes the army's unrestrained power.

# The military's 'dirty war' on civilians

By Merrill Collett

BOGOTÁ

**T**WO YEARS AFTER ARMY TROOPS ATTACKED guerrillas holding the Palace of Justice in a bloody shootout that killed everyone inside, Colombia is sliding down a spiral of political violence leading to the elimination of the left.

M-19 rebels seized the headquarters of Colombia's court system on Nov. 6, 1985, to dramatize their claim that the armed forces were violating the cease-fire negotiated by then-President Belisario Betancur. In the ensuing army assault, 11 Supreme Court justices, all 35 guerrillas and dozens of innocent bystanders died.

Today the Palace of Justice building remains shell-shattered and empty, a burned-out memory of the army's unrestrained power. There is strong evidence that military intelligence officers are using that power to wage an undeclared war that has claimed hundreds, perhaps thousands, of victims.

It's believed that the latest victim was Jaime Pardo Leal, the leader of the leftist Patriotic Union (UP) party. Pardo, a 46-year-old former Superior Court judge, was shot down on October 11 by three unidentified assassins. His murder set off two days of violent protests that left 11 people dead.

"Elements in the armed forces are encouraging paramilitary groups and death squads and developing a real dirty war, in the Argentine style," said Eduardo Pizarro, a National University sociologist who was appointed to a government commission that studied the sources of Colombian violence.

The commission's 300-page report, issued in July, quickly became a best seller after the

following series of dramatic murders that dominated the news in the month of August:

- On August 14 gunmen crashed a jeep through the front door of Sen. Pedro Valencia's Medellín home and shot him 23 times with submachine guns in front of his wife and four children. Valencia's name joined the list of more than 450 members of the leftist UP party murdered since it was launched in 1984.

- Five days later the bodies of 11 men belonging to a peasant self-defense group created by the army turned up in the Cauca Valley, victims of an ambush by another paramilitary group set up by a local police inspector.

- And on August 25, a day that sent the nation into mourning, revered university professor Dr. Hector Abad and a colleague were shot to death in Medellín as they left for the funeral of another professor mur-

dered that morning. During national student protests against the three deaths, police killed a demonstrator in Bogotá.

**Killings galore:** Murder has become so widespread that life itself is a political issue. "Long Live Life" has become a chant heard at meetings and marches held by unions, professional associations and student groups.

The non-partisan Permanent Committee for the Defense of Human Rights, Colombia's leading human-rights group, says 976 political killings were committed last year, an increase of more than threefold since 1981. Foreign correspondents who cover Colombia find that more and more of their sources on the left are being killed. Banana workers union President Alberto Argulo, who was interviewed by this reporter on September 11, was shot down three weeks later. His replacement has also been assassinated.

There is widespread concern that Colombia is on the threshold of another bloody epoch like "La Violencia," when more than 200,000 people died in a decade of death set off by the assassination of populist leader Jorge Eliecer Gaitan in 1948.

In sheer numbers, street crimes, drug trafficking and personal disputes account for the majority of current homicide victims—more than 90 percent, according to the commission—but Pizarro and other analysts say the struggle for political power is at the core of the killings now, as it was during "La Violencia."

The killers have set their sights on members of the UP. It was created by the Soviet-line Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, to run candidates in last year's

congressional and presidential elections. With some 4,000 cadre, the FARC is the oldest and largest of four Colombian guerrilla groups, and its decision to launch the UP was one of the few concrete results of Betancur's effort to coax armed insurgents into the electoral arena. Since then four of 14 UP congressmen have been killed, but authorities have jailed only three suspects in these and the other 475 UP slayings.

Last year Amnesty International accused authorities of complicity in 600 deaths in the first half of 1986, and former Attorney General Carlos Jimenez charged that security forces had mounted a campaign of "official violence." In one case in August the killer of a UP mayor was found with a gun permit signed by a captain in the army's intelligence division. The captain claimed the permit was forged, but a self-confessed collaborator in the crime has stepped forward to confirm the crime.

Alfredo Vazquez Carrizosa, a former foreign minister who heads the Permanent Committee on Human Rights, called the killings of UP leaders "an offensive against non-traditional democratic methods"—in other words, a bloody defense of Colombia's tightly controlled two-party system.

**Unjustified violence:** For the past century and a half, the Liberal and Conservative parties have used ballots and bullets to maintain a monopoly on political power in Colombia. Betancur challenged the system by beginning talks with the guerrillas that led to a cease-fire between the army and the FARC as well as the formation of the UP.

With the FARC's strong base in rural areas, UP candidates are expected to do well in Colombia's first mayoral elections next year, if the UP candidates live that long. "All the UP candidates are condemned to death," said Vazquez, a member of the Conservative Party.

"They are talking about a series of perfectly normal reforms," Vazquez said. "They're not attacking capitalism. It's a totally unjustified violence."

Vazquez and Pizarro both believe that with the murder of Abad in August dirty war assassins have moved from murdering those directly linked to the guerrillas—such as rebels amnestied by Betancur and UP leaders—to targeting nationally known advocates of the right to dissent.

"Now they're not just trying to terrorize the Patriotic Union but all potential subversives—teachers, artists, journalists, intellectuals," said Pizarro.

**Looking the other way:** According to this analysis, every critic of Colombia's traditional two-party politics is now at risk. Vazquez, and other prominent human rights activists, politicians and journalists whose names appeared on a death list published in August, are calling for a thorough investigation. But under Colombian law, the power to investigate the military remains with the military itself, and the general staff has staunchly refused to look into allegations that intelligence officers are coordinating political murders around the country.

Four years ago former Attorney General Jimenez linked 59 active-duty officers to a national death squad founded by drug traffickers, but the defense ministry dropped the matter. Jimenez himself is among those included in the recent death list.

Merrill Collett is a free-lance journalist based in Latin America.



# The Soviet "new left" gets itself organized

With social and political turmoil sweeping through the Soviet Union, a new democratic socialist left has begun to emerge. These new dissidents are not of the variety known to the West, but rather groups that look back to the founding principles of the 1917 revolution as they understand them. So far, this new left is diverse and groping its way. It consists of hundreds—perhaps thousands—of political discussion groups, many of which previously met more or less clandestinely in private apartments. Now they have proclaimed their existence as political clubs or seminars and have been joined by hobby clubs and study groups set up or approved by the Communist Party, but transformed by their members from obediently passive organizations into lively independent associations.

Nothing like this has been possible—or, to many, conceivable—since the defeat of various opposition tendencies and the consolidation of power by Josef Stalin in the late '20s. But the Soviet party is now clearly divided between conservative and liberal factions. And Mikhail Gorbachov's liberal faction, needing to expand its base of support, has been protecting—even encouraging—democratic socialist groupings if they accept the one-party state, even with caveats.

These new groups are the left equivalent of extreme nationalist and anti-Semitic groups like Pamyat (Memory), that exist under the protection of the Party's right wing.

The left groups held their first conference of Unofficial Democratic Clubs on August 20-23 in Moscow with official approval. It was organized by two of Moscow's largest new left groups, the Club for Social Initiatives (CSI) and Perestroika (Reconstruction). About 300 representatives from 52 groups from various cities agreed, despite numerous differences, to create two political associations: the Coalition for Social Initiatives and the Federation of Socialist Clubs.

A new In These Times correspondent, Alexander Severyukin (a pseudonym) took an active part in arranging this conference. The following description, translated and edited by Alexander Amerisov, is based on his report.

By Alexander Severyukin

MOSCOW

THE FIRST DAY OF THE CONFERENCE WAS DEVOTED to ironing out differences between various groups. Supporters of the Club for Social Initiatives (CSI) supported by an organization of young socialists from *Obschina* (Community) proposed a united front around a common program and principles. Another club, *Perestroika*, advocated a loose coalition of groups connected only by general principles.

*Perestroika* won, with creation of the broadly based Coalition for Social Initiatives, but a select number of groups from the coalition also established another political association, the Federation of Socialist Clubs. *Perestroika* joined the federation as well. Neither the coalition nor the federation admits anti-Semites, Stalinists or members of other extremist groups.

Although the Coalition for Social Initiatives developed no common program, its most principles were non-violence and

opposition to fascism, Stalinism and all forms of state oppression of grass-roots initiatives and organizations.

The Federation of Socialist Clubs, on the other hand, agreed on more specific aims. It stressed that power in the country belongs

## SOVIET UNION

to the people and that the people have the right to form their own organizations to represent their interests "without any intermediaries"—a direct slap at the legitimacy of the Communist Party's role. The declaration—due to the necessity of acting, as one conference participant put it, "within the boundaries of political realism"—recognized the "constitutional role of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union," but insisted that the Soviet Communist Party "is not homogeneous. In the ranks of the Party there are those who are directly responsible for all the abuses and mistakes of the past." The federation's declaration added that it will align itself with "leaders and rank-and-file party members who represent healthy and progressive forces." The declaration reasserted its allegiance to the original aims of the Russian Revolution of October 1917 and called for abolition of class divisions in Soviet society and withering away of the state.

**Civil libertarian goals:** Among the federation's immediate aims are the legalization of unofficial political associations, democratization of the electoral system, struggle for the right to nominate candidates to the councils of representatives and to expand the power of the councils, and legal reform as it affects freedom of speech. The federation declared its support for Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachov's program of marketization of the economy, while insisting that social security programs be maintained.

It called on Soviet authorities to cut the size and expense to society of the government bureaucracy, leave government-owned enterprises to their employees, democratize the planning system and create conditions for unhindered development of all forms of socialist property.

The federation also declared its solidarity with the struggle of revolutionary, national-liberation and democratic movements in capitalist and developing countries. The federation sees one of its most important functions in struggle against the growth of National-Bolshevik tendencies in Soviet society and the Communist Party. CSI's A. Wiseberg and *Perestroika*'s D. Leonov stressed that the federation must simultaneously take into consideration the existence of two forms of extremism: "grass-roots extremism" and extremism "from above" represented by those who feel threatened by reforms and resist them.

"State extremism," they said, represented the main danger. But others thought grass-roots fascist groups were the real enemy.

**Official dilemma:** The conference placed Soviet authorities in a difficult position. On the one hand, the conference itself and all the participating groups (with the exceptions of the independent peace organization Trust Group and the club Democracy and Human-

ism) were officially permitted. Moreover, the conference declared support for Gorbachov's reforms and its participants saw political conservatives who oppose Gorbachov as their own enemies. But it is clear that the democratic socialist movement will jealously defend its own independence and will continue to put forward demands that go much further than Gorbachov or the Communist Party may like.

During the first several weeks after the conference, the official press was silent. Still, news of the conference spread throughout the country. A semi-legal congress of the All-Union Pen Club of Social and Political Initiatives took place in Taganrog right after the Moscow conference. Several delegates came directly from the conference in Moscow to tell about what happened. Weeks later, in the early part of September, a Forum of Informal Groupings took place in Leningrad, where the Moscow conference's decisions became an object of discussion. Conference documents are slowly getting into the growing unofficial press as well.

The official Soviet press broke its silence on September 5 with an article about the

## It is clear that the democratic socialist movement will jealously defend its independence.

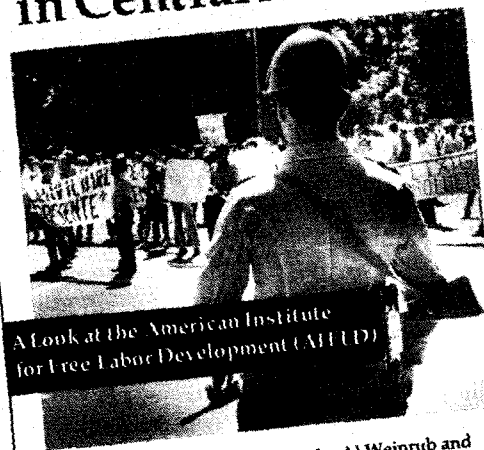
conference in *Ogonyok*, the country's largest illustrated weekly and one of the most controversial. The article, by V. Yakovlev, was positive but to pass censorship had to avoid any mention of specific conference decisions. The creation of the Federation of Socialist Clubs was not mentioned at all. Also unmentioned were demands to abolish preliminary censorship and to change the election laws.

All the same, Yakovlev's article played an important role. It opened the door to discussion in the official media about a Soviet "new left." And by recognizing the conference as fully legal, the article made it easier for groups that took part to gain access to the mass media and to recruit new members.

**Participating groups:** Among the groups that took part in the conference were many clubs of "revolutionary solidarity with Third-World struggle," which had been started by Soviet Communist Party's Youth branch *Komsomol* during the '70s. In their late teens and early 20s—unlike members of CSI and *Perestroika*, most of whom are over 30—the revolutionary "solidarists" came to the conference from organizations with names like "Faribundo Marti Brigade," "Che Guevara Brigade" and "Forest People." Stagnant Brezhnev-era leadership saw in the creation of these clubs a mechanism through which the revolutionary romanticism of Third-World struggles would patch up the Communist Party's waning legitimacy with the Soviet youth. The idea backfired.

Soviet propagandists were unable to limit the groups' focus to events in the Third World. The students touched on such subjects as "degeneration of the workers' state" and Stalinist repressions. They compared the pluralistic traditions of Latin American revolutionary movements, the experience of Chile under Salvador Allende and attempts to create a mixed economy in Nicaragua with Soviet "monolithism." It is interesting that although the independently created CSI, whose members include such former political prisoners as B. Kagarlitskii and G. Pavlovskii, was allowed to organize this conference, the officially organized clubs of revolutionary solidarity, which wanted to have their own conference, were recently denied such permission. □

## The AFL-CIO in Central America



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# AFL-CIO

Continued from page 3

trous," Herman Benson, director of the Association for Union Democracy, said of the Teamster readmission. "It's a final admission the AFL-CIO is completely incapable of doing anything about corruption in the labor movement. They talk of unity, but it's like the unity between a man and the poison he drinks."

The corruption issue is historically important. When the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations merged in 1955, CIO leaders like Walter Reuther insisted on an ethical practices code. Among other stipulations, it did not allow union officials to remain in office after

they took the Fifth Amendment in court, as Presser has done with the Teamsters.

"Just what the organization needs, more gangsters and right-wingers," one union official quipped. Several officials worried that the move strengthens the conservative forces in the AFL-CIO. It increases the chances for either Food and Commercial Workers' Wynn or Building and Trades' Georgine succeeding Kirkland instead of heir-apparent Secretary-Treasurer Tom Donahue or someone more liberal.

"It will move the AFL-CIO to the right," Clothing and Textile union Vice President Ed Clark said. "On the Teamsters' part it's a cynical ploy to gain protection, and for the AFL-CIO it's easy money." Kirkland denied that readmission would help protect

Teamsters from a potential government trusteeship, although unions strongly oppose such a move.

**Public perceptions:** The Teamsters make it easy to understand why the new "Union Yes" advertising campaign faces tough going. AFL-CIO polls and other surveys show that a majority of Americans believe most employees don't need unions; that unions are too weak to protect members; that unions increase companies' risk of going out of business; that unions should have less influence; and that the large reduction in union membership is good for the country. Majorities also believe that employers should take a tougher line with unions; that union members don't work as hard as others; that labor leaders aren't very honest and are out of touch with members; and that unions undermine productivity.

To counter such overwhelming negative images, the media campaign will attempt to show how unions give workers a voice on their jobs and strengthen the individual's quest for respect, according to the Labor Institute of Public Affairs (LIPA) director, Larry Kirkman. Using individual workers backed up by stars like Dolly Parton, Dionne Warwick and Kris Kristofferson, the ads will show workers saying yes to unions as well as the goals to which unions say yes, Kirkman said.

The campaign is intended to help organizing efforts and to "raise the threshold level of respect of the labor movement among the general public," said Nick DeMartino, LIPA assistant director. "But it's also to provide a definition of trade unionism to a new generation of workers who don't understand it."

The new image campaign is meant to show

unions less in the position of overt conflict with management, especially since most workers tell pollsters they don't feel themselves in such a situation. Unions will instead be portrayed as problem-solvers.

Although some union public relations specialists worry that the campaign may lean to the "soft sell" and downplay the "struggle" aspect of unionism, the LIPA directors say they and their professional ad agency are attempting to lay some basic foundations for union support among a very hostile public. **Central American stand:** At least on Central America policy, the AFL-CIO is now more in tune with the broad American public. The growth of union opposition to U.S. policy in the region, along with the Iran-contra hearings and the emergence of a Central American peace plan, have worked to constrain conservative forces in the AFL-CIO.

Recent convention foreign policy resolutions show a steady progression toward a less militaristic policy, this time clearly calling for "withdrawal of U.S. military assistance to the contras." It also calls for an end to Soviet or Cuban aid to the Sandinistas, but the two issues are not linked as before. "It's moved a long way from the last convention," said Government Employee union President Ken Blaylock.

"I'm proud of this organization for calling in clear and unequivocal terms for no military assistance to the contras," Clothing and Textile President Jack Sheinkman said. Now the hand of anti-contra union lobbyists will be strengthened in Congress.

In a week of image worries, the foreign policy shift was a move that improved the U.S. labor movement both in image and reality.



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By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

**T**HE NOMINATION OF SPANISH SCIENTIST Federico Mayor Zaragoza to head UNESCO may save the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization from the far-right Heritage Foundation's remarkably successful campaign to destroy it. The nomination came at dawn on October 18 after a week of emotion-charged balloting by the 50-member executive council meeting in Paris. It is up to the organization's general conference when it meets November 7 to decide whether or not Mayor will succeed Amadou Mahtar M'Bow of Senegal as director general.

If so, it may be harder for the U.S. and Britain to justify their boycott of the organization. The two countries left UNESCO in 1984 and 1985 following campaigns organized by the Heritage Foundation accusing the African leadership of anti-U.S., anti-Western "politicization." Mayor, a 53-year-old specialist in cerebral metabolism, means to cut back UNESCO's administrative overgrowth and make it over into a sort of think-tank to design international projects. The British Labour Party has indicated it will urge rejoining UNESCO if Mayor is confirmed as director.

Such a happy ending was not in sight when the election began. The Heritage Foundation campaign had succeeded in poisoning the atmosphere. The Africans felt victimized. And nobody else—not even the usually fair-minded Scandinavians—seemed to care enough about UNESCO to sort out the charges and countercharges.

As has been explained by Australian Ambassador to UNESCO, former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, to further its attack on the U.N. system in general the Heritage Foundation in 1983 hired American-born Owen Harries, who had served as Australian ambassador to UNESCO. Harries led the attack in the U.S. and later in Britain.

The press was responsive to the anti-UNESCO campaign because one of its prime targets was the idea of a "new world information order," no more than a discussion of how to improve communications in poor countries, but presented as a sinister machination of Third World and Soviet bloc countries to strangle the free world's free press. This ridiculous slander was accepted by most editorialists in the West, probably because of the chance it gave them to defend themselves heroically against a non-existent danger.

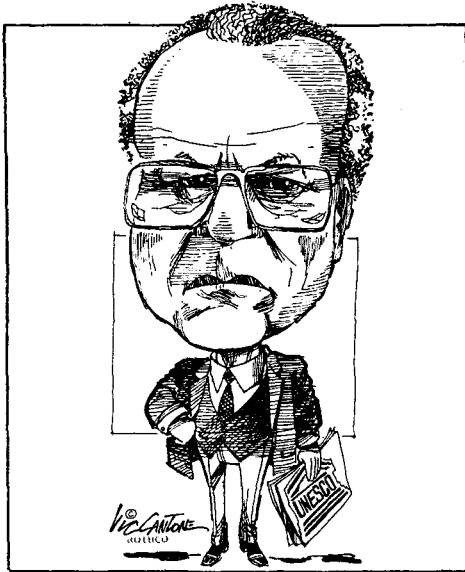
Not all the criticism of UNESCO was without merit. Indeed, some say Heritage aimed at UNESCO precisely because it was a soft target.

The worst of it was that the attacks on UNESCO's Senegalese Director General M'Bow, for incompetence, were interpreted as racist by the French-speaking African group in general. And in view of the Heritage Foundation's general attitude this interpretation has some validity.

Africa has more than its share of world problems and very few of the world's honors. M'Bow at the head of UNESCO has been one of the most prized. Politically, M'Bow emerged as a cautious colleague of the very pro-French ex-President Leopold Senghor of Senegal. It was an intolerable offense to Africans when the very moderate M'Bow was attacked in the Western press as a ferocious Third World "militant" simply for being African.

**A bad idea:** M'Bow served two six-year terms as UNESCO director general and at

# Compromise candidate may solve UNESCO's 'Heritage' troubles



Amadou Mahtar M'Bow, UNESCO's current director general.

age 66 could have decided to retire with honor. He had weathered the U.S. and British withdrawals with commendable calm. But then he and the African group, or at least the French-speaking African group, got the unfortunate idea that, because they were unfairly attacked, they were above criticism, and that to save their honor M'Bow should be elected to a third term.

This mistake was encouraged by the choice of a retired general from a military dictatorship that enforces Koranic law, Pakistani Foreign Minister Sahabzada Yaqub Khan, as the "pro-Western" candidate. The choice was another sign that the West did not give a damn about UNESCO. Amazingly, France, the home country and traditional guardian angel of UNESCO, backed this ruinous candidacy. There were rumors that Prime Minister Jacques Chirac's conservative government was thereby angling for arms contracts from Pakistan. The French ambassador to UNESCO appointed by President François Mitterrand, feminist lawyer Gisèle Halimi, sensibly resigned rather than vote for Yaqub Khan.

But when Yaqub Khan withdrew a couple of ballots later, Halimi's successor astonished everybody by switching France's vote to M'Bow. For a moment it looked as if France was trying to do the Heritage Foundation's work and scuttle UNESCO. For, whatever his past merits, a re-elected M'Bow would be the perfect target for a broadened campaign against the organization that could lead Japan and European countries to pull out.

But insiders say the French were thinking of only one thing: keeping the French language as the main language of UNESCO. They were against Mayor because he represents a bigger language group, the Hispanic. Socialists pointed to the Chirac government's handling of the election as a dismal diplomatic fiasco.

UNESCO had commissioned a scholarly work on the history of relations between the U.S. and UNESCO containing considerable material on the Heritage Foundation which its producer, the Institute for Media Analysis in New York, intends to have published. Although the work was still in semi-final manuscript form, the M'Bow faction circulated hunks of it as re-election campaign material.

But Western journalists had already made

up their minds. In the Paris daily *Liberation*, Marc Kravetz wrote incredulously that "the director general's entourage worked heavily to prove that the reproaches against him were a gigantic campaign of 'manipulation' and 'disinformation' fed by the 'Heritage

## UNITED NATIONS

Foundation,' an ultra-conservative American institution close to Reagan circles whose aim is supposed to be nothing less than the destruction of all international institutions once they aren't dominated by the U.S. A passably paranoid argumentation...whose main merit seems to have been to 'justify' M'Bow's new candidacy...."

The reality of American politics under Reagan is apparently just too crazy to be believed. The Heritage Foundation's campaign against the U.N. and its influence with Reagan are a matter of historical record. However, it is more comfortable to accuse Africans of paranoia than to risk offending American friends and contacts. In the poisoned atmosphere, there were traces of paranoia on both sides. Score points for Heritage Foundation.

But score more points for the Russians. Observers unanimously praised the Soviet diplomats as showing the most sense of responsibility. Mayor was something of a dark

horse, who did not even have the backing of his government, although a friend of King Juan Carlos. Russian diplomats privately admitted a preference for an undeclared compromise candidate, Islamic Prince Sadruddin Khan, former U.N. high commissioner for refugees, because he is from the Third World (albeit a multimillionaire) and because "he is too rich to put his hand in the till." In the end, the Soviet bloc abandoned its Bulgarian candidate to vote for Mayor in order to save the organization.

This was in line with the "major change" in Soviet policy toward the U.N. signalled by Premier Mikhail Gorbachov in an article in the September 17 *Pravda*, proposing creation of an international naval force for the Persian Gulf. The powers of the Security Council should be "used to the full," he said.

On October 15 the Soviet Union announced it would "soon" pay the \$197 million in back dues that the USSR has accumulated since 1945. In April 1986 Moscow paid its assessment for the U.N. forces in Lebanon for the first time. The U.S. is in arrears to the tune of \$414 million. This amounts to nearly half the unpaid dues to the U.N. and would amount to 65 percent once the Soviets pay. Unpaid debts will remain as Reagan's gift to the world.

Meanwhile, UNESCO may have been saved by Gorbachov...and the King of Spain. □

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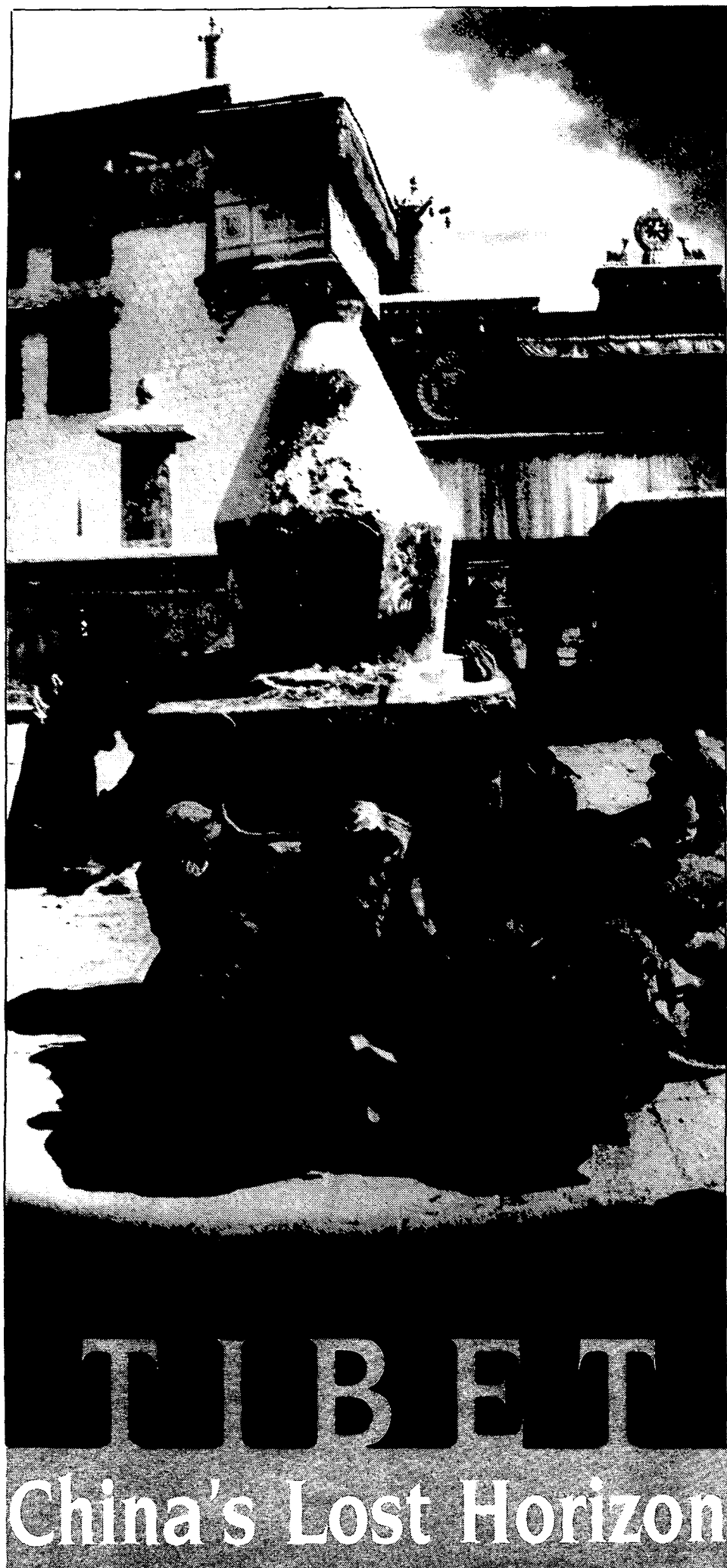
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By William Gasperini

LHASA, TIBET

**F**OR CENTURIES, AS PILGRIMS APPROACHED Lhasa, their first sight of the holy city was the spectacular Potala Palace. They would fall into prayer upon spying the immense, ghost-white edifice, once home of Tibet's god-king, the Dalai Lama.

Today, however, the first sight is not of the Potala but of a spindly radio transmitter resembling a miniature Eiffel Tower. The tower sits on the rubble of a famed medical college dynamited by Chinese troops during the Cultural Revolution along with an estimated 3,000 Buddhist monasteries and shrines.

To many Tibetans the tower symbolizes the horrors of the past 30 years. While the outside has largely forgotten the drama in the high Himalayan plateau, long suppressed frustra-

tions against Chinese rule in the "rooftop of the world" suddenly boiled over on October 1.

In several subsequent protests the Chinese demonstrated how much of an Achilles Heel Tibet remains for China. Beijing quickly rushed hundreds of heavily armed extra troops to Lhasa and arrested dozens of monks and others in house-to-house searches. Authorities banned public processions, expelled 14 journalists and barred further news reports from the region. As the U.S. State Department began a "reassessment" of its earlier position on human rights and Tibet, Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping said a congressional fact-finding trip to Lhasa would not be permitted.

"The Dalai Lama and a few U.S. Congressmen have created a little bit of trouble for us, but this will not affect our overall good

Pilgrims in front of Lhasa's Jokhang Temple.

situation," the Chinese leader said, calling the congressmen "ignorant and arrogant" for meddling in China's internal affairs.

But it seems that the Chinese caused the "little bit of trouble" themselves. Chinese troops fired on a crowd of demonstrators including Buddhist monks, killing at least nine people. The angry crowd also succeeded in burning down a police station. Afterward some of those same monks sent a note to the United Nations, addressing a world that has long turned its attention to other matters.

"The Chinese have ruled violently in our country and we want them to leave Tibet," it read. "We ask the U.N. and all the countries of the world to please support our true cause. We are suffering. The Chinese have taken away Tibetan human rights for the last 30 years."

Tibetans heard reports that the Dalai Lama had called for negotiations over Tibet's future; other reports said the protests erupted after Chinese authorities executed two Tibetans. But most importantly, the protests appeared to reflect growing desperation by Tibetans at a gradual loss of identity and culture that began with the 1950 invasion of the remote mountainous region.

"The greatest danger our people face is the massive influx of Chinese into Tibet," says Sonam Topgyal, spokesman for exiled Tibetan leaders in India. "As a minority, this process will inevitably eradicate what remains of a Tibetan identity." Approximately 100,000 Tibetans live in exile, many in northern India where the Dalai Lama has lived since 1959, when he fled Tibet during a failed uprising against the Chinese (see accompanying story).

**Cultural genocide or forced assimilation?** There are now reportedly 7.5 million Chinese and only six million Tibetans in the historical area of Tibet, now divided into several provinces. Approximately two million Tibetans live in the "Tibetan Autonomous Region" centered around Lhasa but administered from Beijing. Although this status implies greater control over local affairs than in China's other provinces, Tibetans say China totally controls their affairs.

Financial incentives such as doubled salaries have aided the flow of Han Chinese settlers over the past 10 years in what some call a process of deliberate "Sinocization." Lhasa and other urban centers are now strongly Chinese in character, with cubicle-shaped buildings rising beyond the "old town" of whitewashed adobe Tibetan houses.

Central to this "Tibetan section" is the Jokhang Temple that houses an ancient Buddhist image called the "Holist of the Holies." Day and night pilgrims walk clockwise around the temple, which was used as a pigsty by the Chinese during the 10-year Cultural Revolution that began in 1966. Many gather at the front entrance to protest for hours on end.

It was precisely in this area where the recent violence occurred, the most open protest to Chinese rule in 10 years. That sudden outbreak of violence came just days before the 37th anniversary of China's initial invasion of Tibet on Oct. 7, 1950. On that day, the recently victorious Communists under Mao Tse-tung invaded Tibet, citing ancient territorial claims to the "land of snows." While supposedly allowing Tibetans local autonomy, the Chinese actually increased control through the '50s. Their grip became total once the Dalai Lama fled to India in 1959 amid a bloody uprising.

Claiming to have "liberated" Tibetans from an oppressive feudal theocracy, Mao sought to modernize the remote region by constructing roads and large-scale development pro-

jects. The Chinese forced collectivization of agriculture and substitution of traditional barley with wheat, a crop unsuited to the high altitude. These policies proved disastrous, leading to successive famines beginning in the early '60s.

The worst came, however, during the Cultural Revolution. Overzealous Red Guards systematically attempted to eradicate Tibetan cultural and religious tradition. Not one of thousands of monasteries, shrines or ancient fortresses escaped destruction or damage in a land where religious faith permeated every aspect of society. An estimated one million Tibetans perished in forced labor camps, including thousands of Buddhist monks.

**Signs of change:** Policies changed in the late '70s, when new Chinese rulers acknowledged the harshness of the repression and sought to make amends. Authorities lifted burdensome agricultural taxes, began restoring some monasteries and initiated new development projects. Long-suppressed trading markets were again allowed, while further road-building improved communications in the vast region. Although welcome changes, Tibetans both inside and outside of Tibet say they were too little, too late.

"They say there are more schools, and that's true," says Bam Pa, translator at an agricultural school near Lhasa. "The only problem is that all instruction is in Chinese except at one Buddhist school where you must pay. Only 250 of the 1,000 students at Tibet University are locals. Soon no one will speak Tibetan anymore."

Other Tibetans in Lhasa acknowledge there are more doctors in the city, but say the increase has merely kept pace with the growing Chinese community. At the same time, they say traditional Tibetan medicine is in decline.

Despite official claims that Tibetans are better off since the overthrow of the "Dalai clique," visitors today are struck by the stark poverty of a people still burdened by the excesses of the recent past.

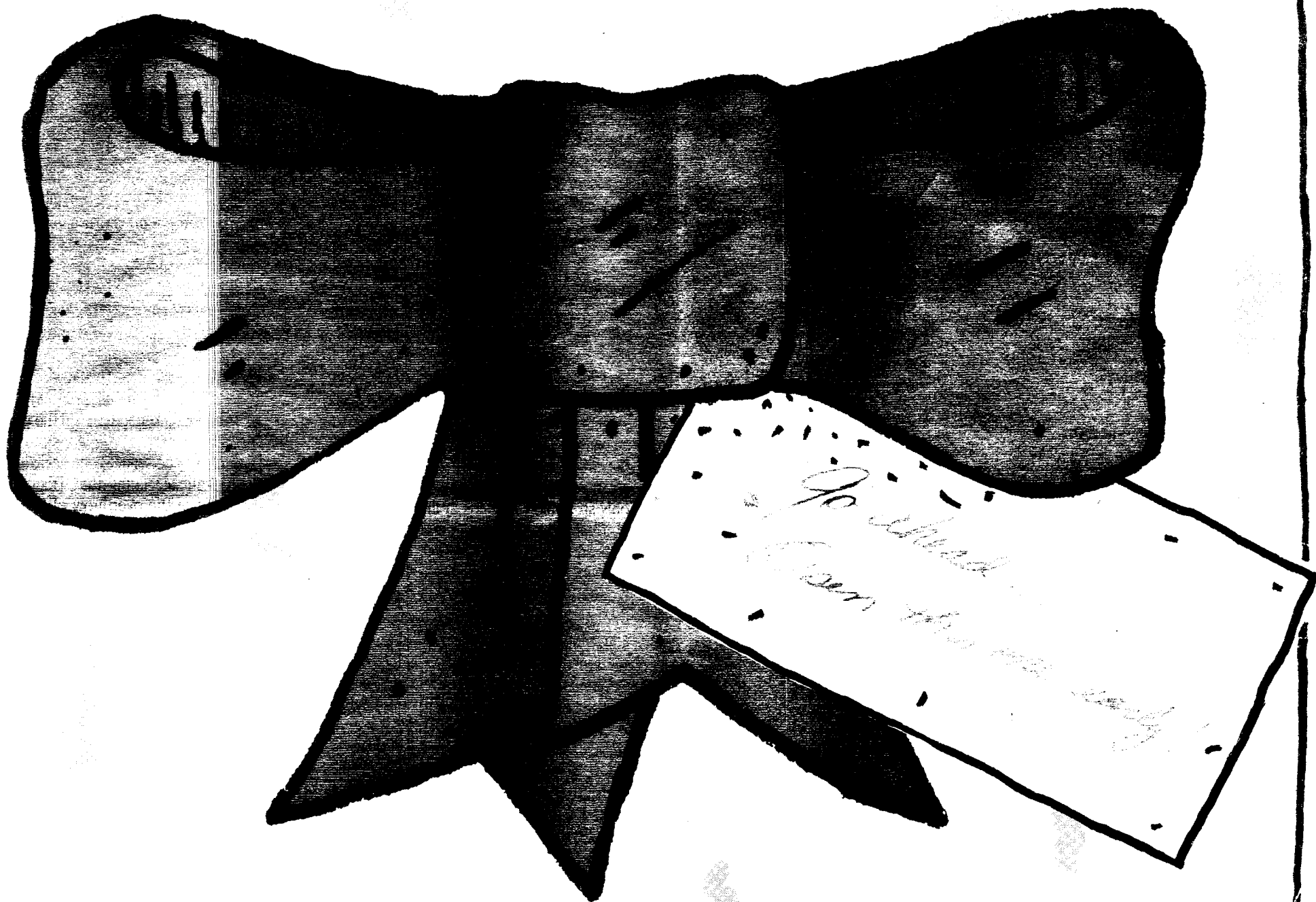


## Roots of Tibetan clas

When Chinese troops invaded Tibet in October 1950, leader Mao Tse-tung said he had come to liberate Tibetans from the world's last "feudal theocracy," as well as reincorporate them "into the motherland." Whether viewed on ideological or political grounds, independent observers have long questioned both assertions in a history of relations with few parallels elsewhere.

Chinese claims on Tibet date from the time both were incorporated into the Mongol empire in the 13th century. Where







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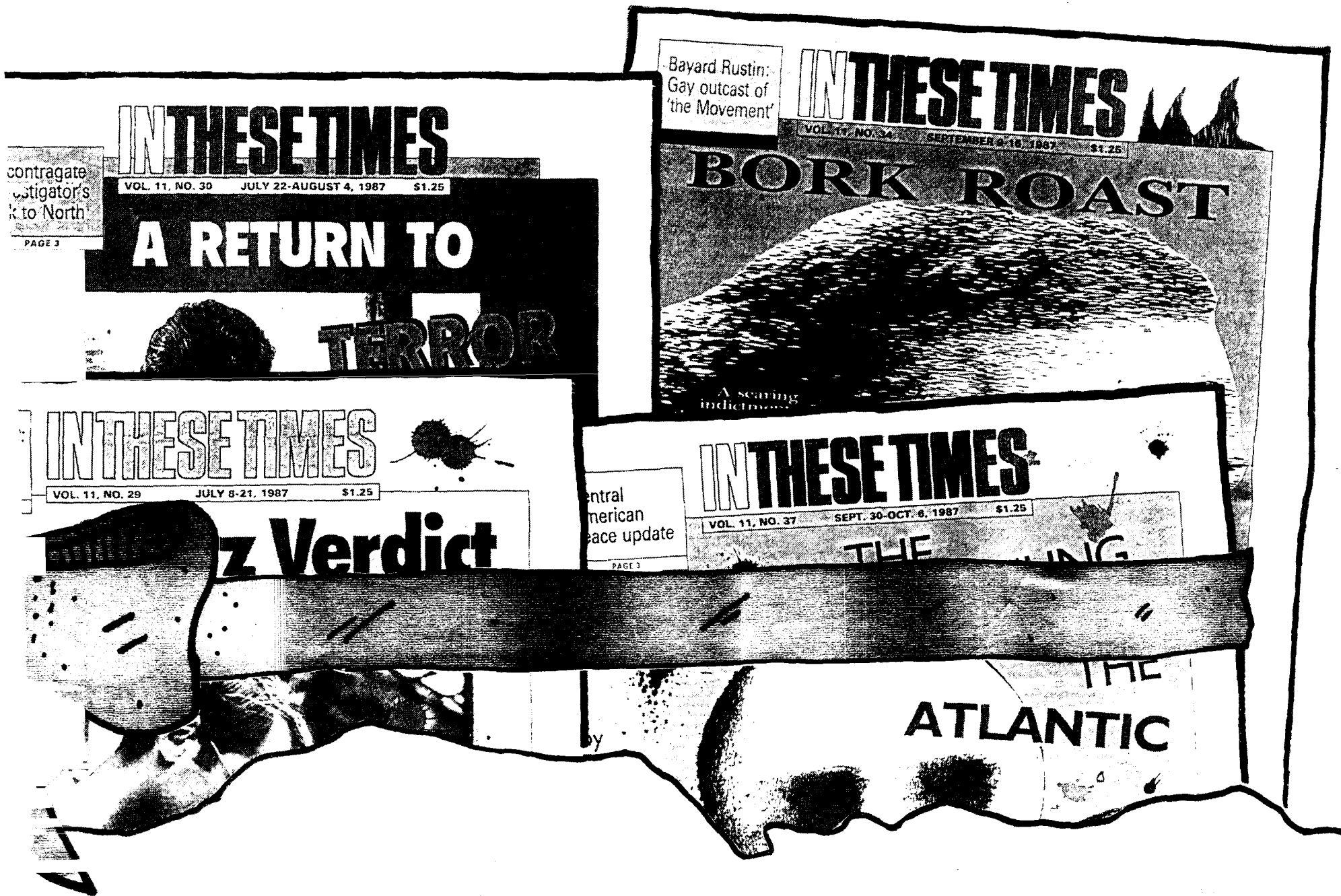
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The Potala Palace is no longer the first sight pilgrims see when approaching Lhasa.

Even for China, Tibetans are poor. Per capita income is estimated at just \$80, half the average for China as a whole. Officially illiteracy is 52 percent, although exiles claim the figure is closer to 80 percent. Life expectancy is 20 years lower than in China proper.

While valley dwellers grow barley and other crops, many Tibetans remain nomadic sheep and yak herders who roam the barren hills and valleys. Thousands of them descend from the higher altitudes to Lhasa as winter approaches, erecting yak-skin tents almost in the shadow of the mighty Potala. Clad in furry wraps, families cook over open fires as barefoot children scamper about, their faces smeared with yak oil for protection from the

strong sun.

The visitor readily detects a Chinese disdain for these "barbarians," who they give as wide a berth as possible. Despite the incentives, it is evident the settlers still consider life in Tibet to involve considerable sacrifice. The two peoples are ethnically distant, and Tibetan resistance to adopting Chinese customs also contributes to Chinese frustrations at being unable to wipe out what they still consider the old "feudal ways."

Most land in pre-1950 Tibet was owned by the state and the monasteries, which over time accumulated great power and wealth. Although tenant farmers were bound to their estates, Tibetans reject characterizing them

as "slaves" or "serfs."

Moreover, throughout history Tibetans have been renowned as traders, owing largely to the difficulties of eking a living from such barren terrain. Merchants, craftspeople, nomads and semi-nomadic farmers comprised much of the population and also defy such a classification.

Nonetheless, few dispute the rigidity or closed nature of the "old Tibet" as a theocratic state, with political and spiritual power firmly embodied in one person. Even the Dalai Lama agrees the pre-1950 system was in need of reform, but says the invasion and subsequent events stole the opportunity.

"Change had to come, but few can believe the destruction has benefitted the Tibetan

people," he once told an interviewer.

Although the liberalization of the '70s eased the destruction wrought by the Cultural Revolution, Tibetans remain highly suspicious of Chinese intentions. Since 1979 Beijing has made overtures for the exiled leader to return, citing the new leniency and openness. But he would have to live in Beijing and represent Tibet in national affairs.

The exiled leader has stated he will return "only if the Tibetan people are satisfied with the situation." He has often expressed skepticism at China's offers, pointing out the unpredictable nature of the Chinese leadership.

Due to its prior isolation, Tibet received little diplomatic support as the process of annexation by China began in 1950. Even today no government recognizes the Dalai Lama's "government-in-exile," although he receives sympathy on his frequent trips abroad. The U.S. has recognized Tibet to be an integral part of China since 1978.

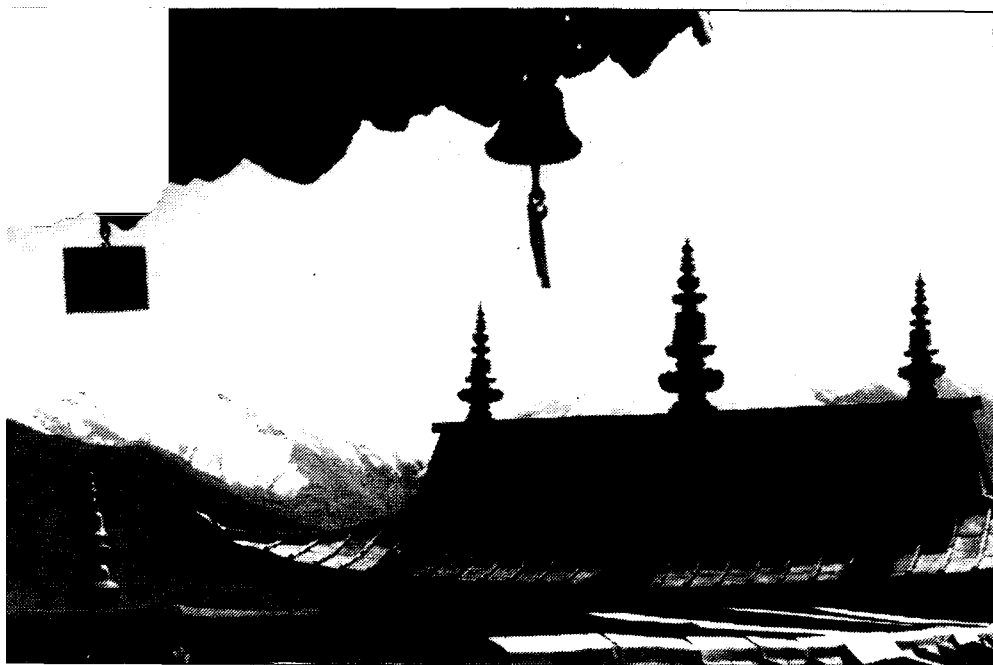
The Tibetan leader had just completed a trip to Washington, D.C., when the recent trouble began. Testifying before a congressional panel, he reportedly proposed a plan calling for the withdrawal of Chinese troops from Tibet, an end to the policy of Chinese settlement and negotiations over Tibet's future.

#### Senate conflicts with U.S. State Department:

On October 6 the Senate voted 98-0 to protest the Chinese crackdown in Tibet. The measure urges President Reagan to meet with the Dalai Lama and requires the administration to certify that progress is being made regarding human rights violations before making further arms sales to China.

The same day, however, the State Department criticized the Senate action as potentially harmful to relations with Beijing. Just prior to the outbreak of unrest, a State Department report noted steady progress had been made in Tibet since 1980, including Beijing's "commitment to preserve Tibet's unique cultural, linguistic and religious traditions."

*Continued on page 22*



## with China go back many centuries

previously both Tibet and China rivalled each other for power—Tibetan troops even occupied the Chinese capital of Xian in 763 A.D.—for the first time both were incorporated into a single political entity.

A crucial difference, however, was the growing strength of four separate Buddhist sects in Tibet, which ultimately wielded great political as well as spiritual power. These sects allowed Tibet to evolve a kind of pope/emperor relationship with the Mongol rulers, avoiding the outright conquest China suffered.

In the 16th century Tibetan abbot Sonam Gyatso succeeded in uniting numerous warring factions and had close relations with Emperor Altan Khan. The latter conferred on Gyatso the title "Dalai Lama" (Ocean of Wisdom) in 1578.

With the granting of the distinction posthumously on two previous lamas, or high monks, Gyatso became third in this line of 14 leaders who ruled Tibet until 1959. Tibetans esteem the Dalai Lamas as reincarnations of Chenrezi, a famed Bodhisattva (a person who has almost

achieved enlightenment, as did the Buddha).

Ancient Tibet reached its apogee under the "Great Fifth" Dalai Lama, who made a famous voyage to Beijing in the 17th century. That trip illustrates the differing historical claims of China and Tibet. Tibetans say the Ming dynasty emperor received him as a sovereign of equal rank; the Chinese say he merely represented Tibet as a vassal state.

Successive Dalai Lamas proved weak rulers, and as the Manchus came to power in China, Chinese control over Tibet steadily increased. China wielded nominal control over Tibet as it vied with imperial Britain (in neighboring India) and czarist Russia for influence in Asia in the late 19th century.

British concerns over Tibetan relations with Russia led to a 1904 British military "expedition" that forced its way into Tibet, bringing a large group of Westerners to Lhasa for the first time and resulting in a treaty between the two.

Ironically, the 13th Dalai Lama sought help in China at the time; he later fled to India during tumultuous events preceding the 1911 overthrow of the Manchu dynasty, which afforded the opportunity for the Tibetans to finally expel the Chinese.

But the Chinese were back in force in 1950, as the recently victorious Communists under Mao arrived to reincorporate Tibet "back into the motherland."

Under the hastily-installed 14th Dalai Lama, then just 16 years old, Tibet was forced to sign an agreement in 1951 acknowledging Chinese control over defense and foreign affairs, but which supposedly allowed for autonomy in internal matters.

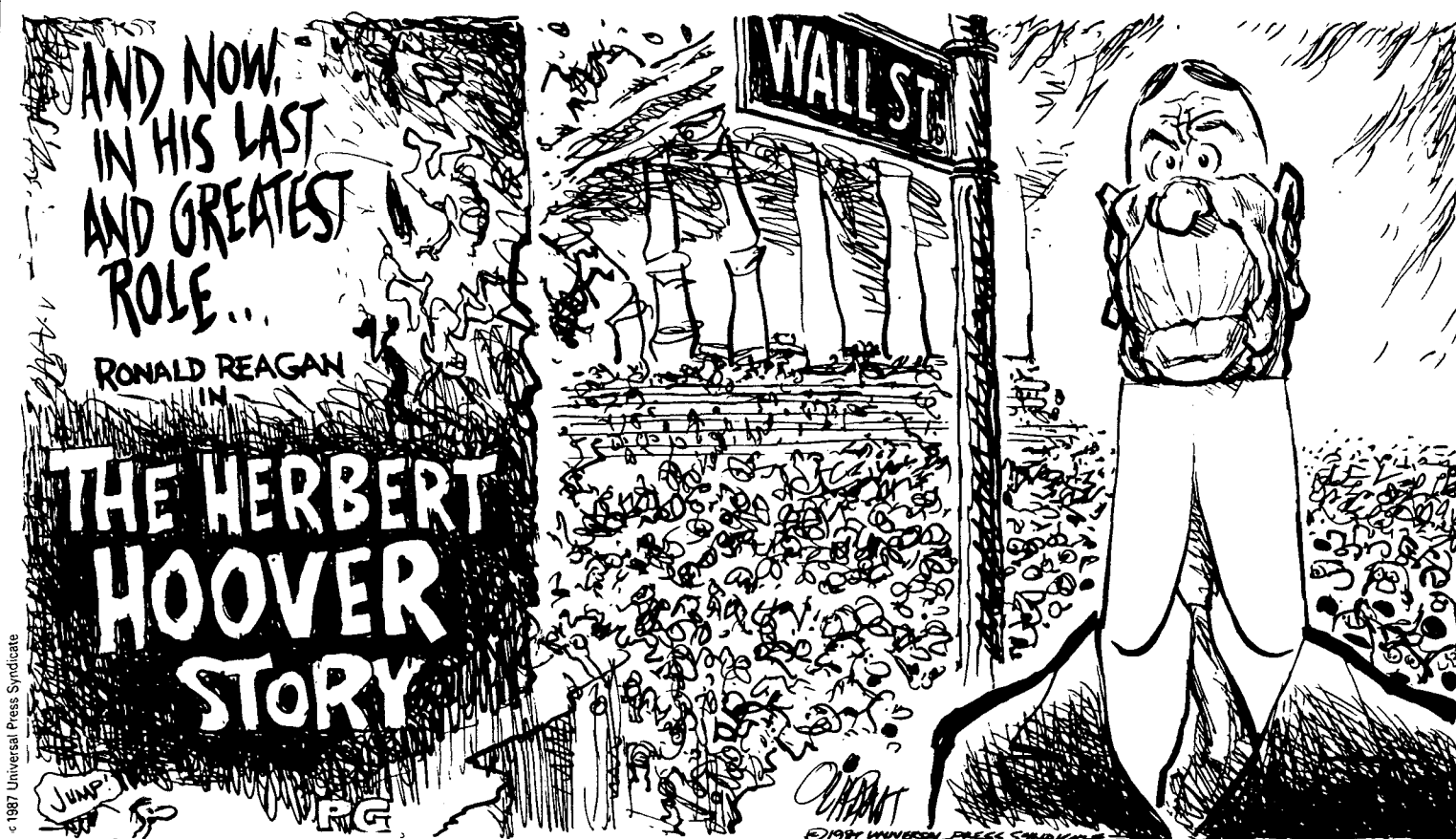
Increasing Chinese control in the '50s sparked a rebellion aided by the CIA in one of its lesser-known operations. Clashes between a Tibetan guerrilla army and the Chinese culminated in a bloody uprising in March 1959 that forced the Dalai Lama to flee into exile in India. An estimated 87,000 Tibetans died as the Chinese crushed the insurrection.

The CIA-supported resistance continued throughout the '60s and included training of guerrilla fighters in Colorado. Fighting a hit-and-run war in the almost treeless Tibetan terrain proved extremely difficult, however, and the war effort eventually ended with the "opening" to China in the early '70s.

The takeover has widely been interpreted as strategic, with Beijing interested in holding "the high ground" in Central Asia. Today the Chinese maintain a heavy military presence in Tibet, where a border dispute with India has remained unresolved since the two Asian giants fought a brief war in 1962. China is also thought to have nuclear sites in Tibet, which now comprises one-fourth of China's total area.

**-W.G.**





## A utopian dream turns to common sense

So far, President Reagan and the majority of Republicans and Democrats in Congress seem, in different ways, to be following in Herbert Hoover's footsteps. Reagan, like Hoover after the crash of 1929, seems unaware of the dangers facing the nation. The president's utterances that the economy is sound and the stock market crash is a normal adjustment to an overheated market bring to mind Hoover's naive contention that a return to prosperity was just around the corner. Meanwhile Congress, also like Hoover, is calling for increased taxes in order to balance the budget.

But of course this is not 1929. Things are both better and worse. As a result of the New Deal regulatory reforms and social welfare programs, there are many mechanisms in place to moderate the effects of a deeply troubled economy. These can be counted on to offer some protection against a return to the days of the Great Depression. On the other hand, the underlying problems may prove more intractable. Without a drastic change in our social priorities—and the economic policies that they entail—we may be in for a long slide into depression.

The triggers for the stock market panic seem to have been a combination of another near-record trade deficit in August and a rise in West German interest rates. These are related to a federal deficit that has risen more under Reagan than under all previous presidents put together—which is why, as House Ways and Means Chairman Dan Rostenkowski (D-IL) says, the need to reduce the deficit is "present in every analysis." And indeed, most Democrats and Republicans are saying the deficit should be reduced by a combination of social spending cuts and tax increases, even though both tend to constrict the economy.

Fear of such a constriction has spawned unusual agreement between Keynesians and supply-siders. Both groups fear that the proposals for deficit reduction will spawn a new depression. The Keynesians object most strongly to a reduction in social spending that will lead directly to a reduction in income available for consumption. The supply-siders claim that any tax increase will reduce, rather than increase, revenues because of a disincentive to invest that higher taxes supposedly cause.

Reagan, of course, has been a secret Keynesian—he may not even

realize it himself. The American economy has been kept going these past seven years in large part by unprecedented pump-priming in the form of military spending. But Reagan's military Keynesianism, unlike the traditional form, has contributed greatly to the present problems. It has done so because the large deficit did not increase consumer spending. It served instead mainly to enrich military contractors, even while the Reagan tax cuts were putting billions of extra dollars into the pockets of the wealthy. The result was lots of excess capital at a time of declining real income for working people, which meant a relative loss of purchasing power and, therefore of incentive to invest in productive enterprises.

The outcome of that, as we know too well, was a booming speculative stock market, mergers and leveraged buyouts, as well as other forms of unproductive investment. These were accompanied by high interest rates caused by heavy government borrowing, which pulled capital from all over the world into American financial markets. Thus the vast increase in investor income under Reagan went into all the wrong kinds of investments.

But even if it is a good idea to reduce the deficit now in order to bring greater stability to financial markets, it is a terrible idea to cut social spending or to increase taxes on low- and middle-income consumers. To do that is only to flirt with depression. In short, every policy alternative designed to solve one problem exacerbates another—or so it seems to those who accept the social priorities of the Cold War era.

In fact, there is another alternative. It is to increase taxes only on the wealthy—to bring back, or into being for the first time, a genuinely progressive tax system—and to reverse our priorities in government spending by drastically cutting military expenditures and vastly increasing spending on education, health care, housing and the infrastructure. That would make possible a more nearly balanced budget, while increasing popular purchasing power, and, therefore, the need for productive investment. The political problem, however, is that it would require a head-on challenge by the Democratic Party to the central Cold War myth of a Soviet threat. It would require vision and the courage to argue that the true defense of our nation does not lie in preparation for a war that will never occur, but in a commitment to the realization of the promise of American democracy. And it will require abandonment of the idea that all nations must be created in our image. It seems today a utopian aim. But it may not be too long when that will seem the only realistic path.

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By Jordan Barab

**D**AN DE NOON'S ARTICLE ON THE EFFECT of AIDS on health-care workers (*In These Times*, Oct. 14) accurately reflects the psychological toll that this illness is taking on the health-care community. Unfortunately, DeNoon overlooks one of the main causes of that anxiety: the lack of infectious disease safeguards that exist in many hospital workplaces.

The effort of health-care workers exposed to infectious diseases to receive health and safety protections like those of workers exposed to chemicals is becoming a major labor-management struggle.

DeNoon accurately cites statistics showing that it is extremely difficult to become infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) even after a direct exposure to contaminated blood. But he dismisses the concerns of health-care workers, by claiming that on-the-job AIDS infections have been due to "extraordinary circumstances."

Unfortunately, however, hospital workers who have been infected on the job were exposed not through "extraordinary circumstances," but through needle sticks and splashes on open skin wounds or mucous membranes (eyes and mouth). These are common events in all hospitals. But most, if not all, such exposures could have been prevented if the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) AIDS guidelines had been followed for safely disposing of needles as well as using gloves and masks.

DeNoon notes that the CDC guidelines "do not involve extraordinarily difficult procedures," and that "housekeeping personnel need take no greater precautions than usual...." But in many hospitals the tragic reality is that workers—especially less-skilled workers—are unable to follow the CDC guidelines because they have never been trained, or because they do not have adequate equipment or time.

Health-care employees complain that hospitals often do not supply the personal protective equipment needed by those who have contact with blood and body fluids. Workers report frequently that gloves are not available, or that the correct size gloves are not available, or that management discourages the use of gloves.

Understaffing intensifies the problem. Even at facilities where workers are properly trained, an overworked hospital employee may not be able to take the time to search for a needle disposal box or gloves that fit.

Furthermore, despite CDC's suggestion that AIDS guidelines should be followed for contact with *all* blood and body fluids—whether or not the person is known to be infected—many hospitals do not allow workers to take full precautions unless a patient has already been diagnosed with AIDS.

**Not just AIDS:** And AIDS is not the only issue. CDC AIDS guidelines are actually a more detailed version of older CDC guidelines issued to protect health-care workers from hepatitis B, which is transmitted in the same way as AIDS. Hepatitis B, while not universally fatal, is actually a greater threat to health-care workers than AIDS. Only a handful of health-care workers are known to have been infected with the AIDS virus from on-the-job exposure—and none of these has yet died. But the Occu-



## Lack of AIDS safeguards fuels health workers' fears

tional Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) estimates that between 200 and 300 health-care workers die every year from hepatitis B infections and related cirrhosis of the liver and liver cancer. Following the AIDS guidelines will, therefore, not only protect workers from AIDS, but also from serious disease or death from hepatitis B infections.

The infectious disease issue has become a typical labor-management struggle over workplace safety. Dangerous exposures to blood are often blamed on careless or lazy workers. But like any workplace health-and-safety situation, many employers have had to be forced to implement commonly accepted guidelines.

CDC has no power to enforce its guidelines, and OSHA has never considered infectious diseases an occupational hazard. Health-care workers have no place to turn for enforcement when they find guidelines being ignored.

Consequently, hospital workers—and those who work in other jobs with high exposure to body fluids—have been turning to their unions to provide education and training needed to do their jobs safely. For the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), which represents more than 250,000 health-care workers, AIDS has created more demand for information than any other safety issue.

**Asking OSHA for help:** AFSCME petitioned OSHA in September 1986 for an

"Emergency Temporary Standard" covering blood-borne infectious diseases. AFSCME's petition was followed shortly by similar petitions from the Service Employees International Union, the National Union of Hospital and Healthcare Employees and the Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals.

The AFSCME petition asked OSHA to adopt the CDC guidelines immediately into an enforceable standard. A hospital worker who was not being supplied with gloves, or a housekeeping or laundry worker who was constantly finding used needles in the trash or in the laundry, would then be able to call for an OSHA inspection and have the hospital cited.

The unions received support from Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert Windom. In a letter to OSHA Director John Pendergrass, Windom called the hepatitis B virus "a potent carcinogen, second only to smoking as a worldwide cause of cancer." Citing the fact that cancer (Kaposi's Sarcoma) is also one outcome of AIDS, Windom recommended to OSHA that "the preventative measures usually afforded to workers to protect them from hazardous physical and chemical exposure be provided as well for their protection against infectious agents in the workplace."

The hospital industry, led by the American Hospital Association (AHA), had opposed an infectious disease standard. Although the industry agreed with the main content of the unions' petitions, it opposed

government regulation. The AHA began its own program to convince hospitals to institute universal precautions.

Union petitions received little attention from OSHA until last May, when CDC revealed that three additional health-care workers had been infected by the HIV virus—not from needle sticks, but by short-term splashes of infected blood. Newspaper reports appeared describing the refusal of health-care workers to care for those suspected of having AIDS, and congressional committees began scheduling hearings. Finally, last July, OSHA rejected the unions' petitions for an emergency standard and announced its own program.

**OSHA's response:** OSHA Director John Pendergrass announced that the agency would initiate its routine rule-making process for a standard covering blood-borne diseases. This procedure will take at least two years, probably much longer.

Pendergrass also announced a targeted hospital inspection program, including, if necessary, enforcement of CDC guidelines under OSHA's General Duty Clause. The General Duty Clause is the catch-all standard that requires employers to provide safe and healthy workplaces.

Finally, in close consultation with the unions, OSHA would also develop and distribute educational materials for workers and advisory notices to hospitals.

For now, the concerned unions are giving OSHA the benefit of the doubt. AFSCME is encouraging its members to file OSHA complaints if they find that CDC guidelines are not being followed in their workplaces.

According to Pendergrass, OSHA means business. At a recent meeting, a representative of the hospital industry asked what grace period would be given to hospitals to comply with the guidelines. Pendergrass replied, "None." Hospitals should have been aware of these guidelines for years and if an OSHA inspector uncovers a violation tomorrow, the hospital will be cited.

The unions are wary, however. OSHA has reluctantly taken on a major new responsibility. Yet the critically understaffed agency has not asked for new staff or funding. OSHA is on the verge of releasing several documents for hospitals and health-care workers, but the promised consultation with the unions did not materialize and some of the late drafts contain serious flaws. Finally, OSHA has a long history—under this and other administrations—of making promises it does not keep.

**Jordan Barab** is the occupational safety and health coordinator for the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees in Washington, D.C.

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander





## Intellectuals' cop-out hinders development of a new left

By James Petras

**T**HE DEEPER THE CRISIS OF CAPITALISM, the more irrelevant the response of the Western intellectual. The more disastrously the market operates, the greater the intellectual attachment to the market. Thirty million are unemployed in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development countries, yet the intelligentsia celebrates anew the virtues of unrestrained capitalism.

From Paris to Buenos Aires, passing through Rome, Madrid, to Santiago to New York and Chicago, the major intellectual centers are experiencing one of the most striking intellectual turnabouts since the end of World War II—a conscious rejection of Marxism and an embrace of a variety of liberal and conservative doctrines, beliefs and opinions, on the basis of newly discovered social scientific truths. And it is precisely among those intellectuals who came to political age during the '60s that some of the most virulent apostasies have occurred. In the cruder versions it is simple *arrivisme*, the desperate grasping for respectability and power. With others it is craving after "privacy"—the exhaustion of political ideas; liberal democracy becomes the nursing home for middle-aged ex-leftists. For many it is the pressures of an increasingly de-politicized student body in search of careers—

absorbed in the narrow world of bookkeeping (accounting majors have tripled over the past few years), electronic screens (computer courses are the most popular) and professional schools (lawyers and doctors are our highest-paid professionals).

**The winds of fashion:** It is no longer fashionable to be on the left—and Western intellectuals are highly fashion-conscious. The fashion now is to be "post" with a hyphen: post-Marxist, post-industrial, post-class, post-materialist. To strike such a posture is seen as the pinnacle of advanced thought—even if it turns out that what is taken to be "after" or "beyond" is in reality a warmed-over version of previously discredited doctrine.

Ex-leftists have a short memory, limited recall, theoretical amnesia. To begin with, their "alternative"—the theoretical breakthroughs that have enabled them to "transcend Marxism"—are puerile. There are endless variations. For some what shapes political practices is not class but "culture"—culture has become a determining sphere.

For others the theoretical breakthrough is revealed in the idea of "democracy without adjectives": "democracy" has no class determination. It stands for itself above motives of class power. Electoral regimes continue to be basically conditioned by the state—the permanent civil, judicial, military bureaucra-

cies—and the dominant classes with which it is linked. The distinction between changes in regime and state are obscured by the notion of "classless democracies."

For those who make their exit from class politics dabbling in state theory, there is the "autonomy of the state"—a state determined by itself. A kind of Hegelianism turning Marx on his head (since an autonomous state must do something, it is the shaper and mover of classes).

For those who want to study world capitalism without classes "core-states" replace imperialism in transferring billions from the "periphery"—not the exploited classes of the Third World. World system analysts substitute geographical economic categories

### A profound gap exists between historical trends and ideological reflections.

(core/semi-periphery/periphery) and social mobility in the capitalist hierarchy (shifts to and from core, etc.) for classes, class conflict and socialist transformation.

And for those who are enamored with their word processors there are the "post-industrial societies"—variously dubbed "technological" or "information societies"—which, unfortunately, still are pouring hundreds of billions of dollars in parasitical speculative activity, in the stock market, floating bonds and loans here and abroad.

**No excuse:** These intellectual exercises don't take place in a time of capitalist boom and innovation under the auspices of benign liberal or social democratic regimes. In those circumstances such intellectual diversions would be excusable: a case of short-sightedness, the usual intellectual malady of theorizing the present. Rather, these profound reflections take place at a time of the growing transparency of class rule. And that is our intellectual problem—the growing obfuscation of political and economic reality at a time of one-sided class warfare.

What is supply-side economics if not, as its exponents describe it, massive transfers of state economic resources to capitalist investors. We learn more today about the relations of class and state from the entrenched right than from the repentant ex-leftists who have joined the search for alternatives to Marxism. If not supply-side economics we can learn about class war by picking up the newspaper and reading about the state savaging the welfare state or the state arming thugs in Central America or southern Africa to restore the classless democracy of the Miami and Lisbon millionaires. Post-Marxian intellectuals must read the comic strips or the sports page in elaborating their theories of politics beyond class.

Post-Marxist intellectuals are escaping from reality. Their cultural reductionism (a pompous effort at inflating their self-importance), pluralist revivalism, democratic formalism and their pretense at being realist policy coaches for liberal bourgeois politicians defies reality.

The basic truth of our time is the unrestrained domination of the state by the capitalist class. That state and class power is shaping the cultural life, and the practice of electoral regimes. The noisy halls of congressional hearings do not debate the justness of imperial murders in Nicaragua, nor

do the cultural conferences affect state cut-backs for the aged, the ill and the single-parent household.

The paradox of all this is that in the '60s, when capitalism was expanding and increasing welfare, many of these same intellectuals were articulating critical reflection on the alienating, dehumanizing effects of capitalist rule. But in the '80s, when capitalism is stagnating, unemployment is high and low-paying non-unionized service jobs are proliferating, there is a growing celebration of the market, and a distant and aloof attitude toward mass struggles. Western intellectuals' market mania of the '80s is their bad conscience responding to uncritical support of Third-World revolution in the '60s. The perversity is compounded when we look at the views of the Western intellectuals toward the Communist bloc. In the '60s, when the East was stagnant and unabashedly authoritarian, a region frozen in the Cold-War rhetoric, Western intellectuals retained an attitude of studied ambiguity. In the '80s, precisely when the East is opening to new intellectual and political currents, Western intellectuals greet it with derision or, at best, desultory yawns and unblinking incomprehension.

**Intellectual gap:** The problem of the Western intellectuals is one of misplaced criticism. There is a profound gap between world-historical development and their ideological reflections on that process. There is a fatal subjectivity that flaws their reflection. In the final analysis the reflections of Western intellectuals are subject to "moods," to particular facts that do not necessarily correspond to global historical developments. In the '60s intellectuals responded to a political will, a need to express personal outrage, to affirm the capacity of individuals to struggle against historical process, to support the Cuban revolution and the Castro leadership—a revolution 90 miles from the most dynamic imperial country of our generation, to identify with the Vietnamese and Ho Chi Minh's peasant revolutionaries against the technological military machine. And throughout Europe and North America, the intellectuals spoke out against the formidable power of the state—it was a giant with clay feet, not an object of worship.

Now Western intellectuals respond to private will, not to public decay; to the ethos of individual competition, not to collective struggle. They respond to established power, not to the movements of "outsiders"; to the quest for order, not to the disintegration of the economy, family and personal relations.

It is no small matter, this defection of the Western intellectuals, not for the left, which depends on the intellectuals in the absence of access to the mass media. Can a left movement emerge if there are few who can provide the theory and analysis to explain the conditions for struggle? It is essential to engage intellectuals in struggle: to unfrock the renegades of the '60s and to move toward the new generation with all of the limitations that we confront in the present period. For one thing is certain, without intellectual clarity and an understanding of the class basis of the deepening crisis, East and West, we are doomed to endless cycles of crisis and stagnation.

James Petras teaches sociology at the State University of New York, Binghamton.



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# The road to full employment

Last month's "Everybody's Business" (*In These Times*, Oct. 7) argued that genuine full employment is possible under U.S. capitalism, despite the fact that full employment is not good for profit-making. Full employment has been achieved in this country in the past—during wartime—and in other capitalist countries even in the absence of war.

Genuine full employment means an economic condition in which all those willing and able to work can find a job reasonably suited to their skills and training in a short period of time. That would prevail if the official rate fell to the 2-3 percent range. Such a low rate reduces "frictional" unemployment, attributable to people changing jobs, to its minimum. A person wanting to leave a job can expect to find another one quickly when the unemployment rate is that low.

But what about "structural" unemployment arising from a mismatch between job requirements and workers' training and experience? Tight labor markets lead employers to revise their hiring requirements. If workers with the desired training and experience are not available employers tend to eliminate unnecessary job requirements, which often serve as a screening device to simplify the handling of large numbers of job applicants. Employers will have an incentive to provide the training essential for the job. While this process has some limits—an unemployed accountant with no experience at manual labor may not readily be trained for a carpentry position—economists have long noted that structural unemployment tends to rise and fall with the overall unemployment rate.

**The benefits of full employment:** Full employment offers benefits that go beyond the gains of the previously unemployed, who are afforded an opportunity to work. Full employment provides workers with significant power over their wages and conditions of work. This power shift operates both on the individual and the collective level. Even in a non-union workplace, the ease of finding an alternative job, and the difficulty of replacing a worker who leaves, gives the individual worker bargaining power. And in unionized workplaces, the workers' ultimate weapon—to strike—is much more effective when labor markets are tight. Strikers can support themselves by finding temporary jobs, and the struck employer finds it difficult to find temporary replacements.

The changed power relation produced by full employment makes it possible for workers significantly to alter working conditions to meet their needs. Job safety issues can be effectively taken up. Flexible work scheduling suddenly becomes possible if that is the only way to get workers. Employer-subsidized day care for workers' children becomes an attainable demand. One sees evidence for this in places and times of full employment—such as during World War II, and even in current-day Massachusetts where the unemployment rate is now 2.5 percent. Some desperate Massachusetts fast-food restaurants pay nearly double the minimum wage and promise flexible hours. However, the effect of 2.5 percent unemployment in one state is less

## EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS

By David Kotz

dramatic than it would be in the U.S. as a whole. Workers cross state lines much more readily than national borders.

It is no accident that black organizations have long called for full employment, since it would reduce the severity of racial oppression. Racist employers are more likely to put aside their prejudices in tight labor markets. The expanded job opportunities especially benefit those who previously had the fewest options. Even if the traditional "non-white"/white unemployment ratio of two-to-one remained, a reduction in the overall unemployment rate from 6 percent to 2 percent would reduce the rate for minority workers from 12 percent to 4 percent, which would be a vast improvement. While all workers' wages tend to rise under full employment, the pay at the low end tends to rise fastest, which promotes equality generally within the working class and particularly benefits workers of color.

The economic reality of capitalism makes workers partially allies of one another and partially competitors in the struggle to survive. The normal condition of labor markets in the U.S. promotes racism among white workers by heightening the competitive side of that relationship. The ever-present threat of unemployment makes workers tend to regard their fellow workers as competitors for scarce jobs. This can lead workers of one ethnic or racial group to fear job market progress by others. Full employment reduces this source of pressure to accept racist ideas and increases the tendency for workers to regard one another as allies regardless of race.

Full employment would eliminate the single largest source of waste in the U.S. economy. Unemployed workers could be producing useful goods and services but are denied that possibility. If the unemployment rate had been 3 percent instead of 7 percent in 1986, the GNP would have been approximately 11 percent greater than it was. That means about \$468 billion of additional goods and services would have been available. This amount is 70 percent greater than federal military spending, 4 percent greater than all federal spending for health and human services, and 20 percent greater than all household spending on consumer durables. It would have amounted to \$1,940 for every person in the U.S.

**Achieving full employment:** Three measures form the foundation of a full-employment program: a government jobs program, an easy-money policy and price controls.

The federal government should act as employer of last resort, offering a public-sector job at a livable wage to anyone unable to find a job in the private sector. The backlog of needed public goods and services could provide jobs for millions of people, on such projects as construction of housing and public buildings, expanded day-care services, bridge and road repair, improvement of rail lines and harbors, and upgrading of parks and the environment, as well as cultural projects employing historians, artists, writers and performing artists. The work could be organized by some combination of federal, state and local government agencies together with private non-profit organizations.

Such a jobs program would directly soak up the unemployed, as it did during 1942-45,

but this time on peaceful projects. The indirect effects on the private sector from expanded public payrolls and increased public purchases of equipment and materials would create nearly as many new jobs in the private sector as in the public sector. This program would be more effective than the minimum-wage law in assuring a living wage for all workers, since private-sector jobs paying below the minimum rate in the jobs program would have difficulty retaining workers.

The second part of this program, an easy-money policy, is necessary to maintain an expanding economy to employ more workers as the labor force grows. Businesses, particularly smaller ones, cannot expand their operations and hire more workers if they cannot get additional credit at a reasonable price. The Federal Reserve Board should aim to bring real interest rates down to the 2-3 percent range, from the current historically high 5-6 percent range.

With unregulated markets, full employment tends to produce inflation. Employers find it easy to pass on wage increases in the form of price increases. Temporary imbalances between supply and demand bring rapid price increases, since resources do not shift rapidly between industries in a full-employment economy. The only way to stop such inflation, which, if left unchecked, could undermine economic growth, is to institute some form of price restraints. That such controls can be effective was demonstrated during World War II, when infla-

tion was held under 3.5 percent with unemployment under 2 percent.

Price controls do not necessarily have to be accompanied by wage controls. Capitalists face no significant opposition from consumers when they decide to raise prices, but that is not the case for workers. Workers have to negotiate pay increases with the employer sitting across the table. But with full employment and price controls in effect, would workers push their wages up so fast that profits would disappear and capitalists would lose their incentive to stay in business?

That is the main obstacle to full employment: the threat it poses to capitalists' ability to make profits. The solution is for workers to use the power that full employment grants them in a way that allows capitalists an "acceptable" rate of profit—with the "acceptable" rate being a matter of bargaining and struggle over time. As long as socialism is not immediately on the agenda, such restraint is the only way to achieve full employment. It may be possible to achieve such a balance through the current, relatively decentralized wage bargaining system in the U.S. Or it may turn out that more centralized wage bargaining is necessary to prevent unworkable and iniquitous outcomes. This would be learned from experience.

To be fully effective, a full-employment program would have to be accompanied by other measures as well, such as expanded public planning of the economy, tax reform and democratization of both public economic agencies and private corporations. These will be the subject of future "Everybody's Business" columns. ■

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By Lynn Travers

## Recasting a mass murder case that wouldn't die

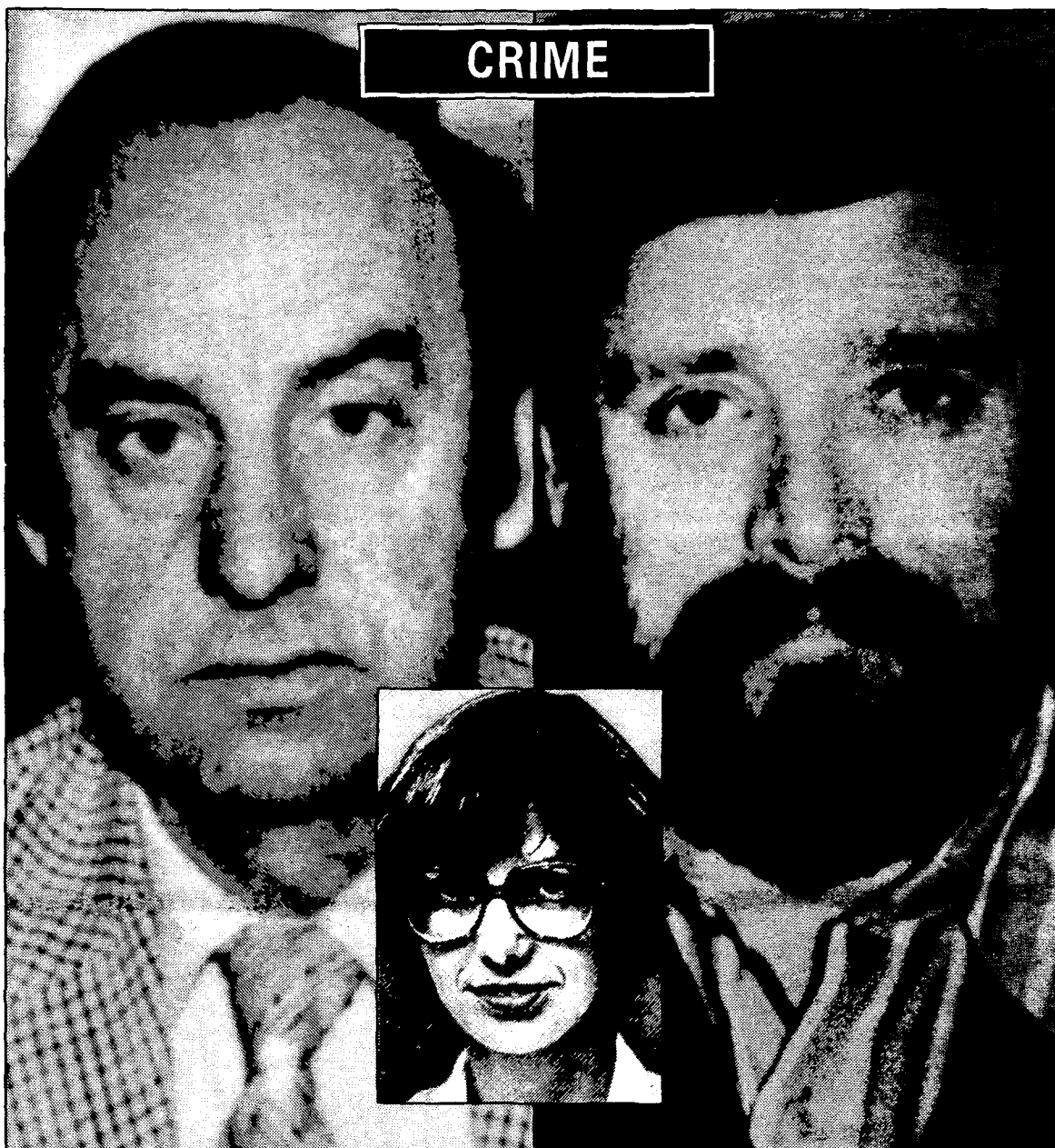
**A**NYTIME YOU HAVE A MULTIPLE murder with overtones of sex, drugs and higher education you've got an interesting story on your hands. When the sordidness of the crime is in such contrast to the lives enjoyed by the surrounding community it's hard for it not to catch the eye of the news media, publishing houses and entertainment industry.

And such is the case with the slaying of Susan Reinert and her two children in June 1979. Reinert's nude, badly beaten corpse was found in the hatch of her car in a motel parking lot near Harrisburg, Pa. Her children's bodies have never been found. Reinert, an English teacher at Upper Merion Area Senior High School in King of Prussia, Pa., had been emotionally involved with and planned to marry William Bradfield, a charismatic, generally respected Upper Merion English teacher. Their principal at the school had been Jay C. Smith, a reclusive man who, some rumored, was a kleptomaniac and maybe a bit of a sex nut. Bradfield is presently serving three consecutive life sentences for the murders; in 1986 a jury sentenced Smith to Pennsylvania's death row for the same crimes.

The Reinert murders have been dubbed in news, literature and press releases "the Main Line murders," a real misnomer. Upper Merion Township lacked the old-money style of the Main Line—the nearby older, wealthy suburbs of Philadelphia. Many who lived in Upper Merion had moved there for the opportunity it afforded their children: a free education—supported by a healthy commercial tax base—comparable to that offered by the Main Line prep schools and that would allow them to compete with the children of privilege.

**Crushingly normal:** While Reinert and Bradfield both lived in other towns, the community that most had to cope with the crimes and their aftermath was Upper Merion; a place that many had moved to for their children's well-being was quickly gaining a reputation as a sex-and-drug capital of the U.S. middle-class. For those who, like my family and myself, have lived in the newer and much more anonymous suburb, the crimes and subsequent infamy are especially baffling. But it's not too surprising that many writing about the case haven't had the easiest time getting a fix on the more ordinary people surrounding these grisly events. It's hard to imagine two people of such unusual personality as Smith and Bradfield operating in anything other than an abnormal environment—and Upper Merion was almost crushingly normal.

Joseph Wambaugh's account of



Central figures in a labyrinthine crime story: Jay C. Smith, Susan Reinert and William Bradfield.

the crimes, *Echoes in the Darkness*, forms the basis for a TV miniseries of the same name aired this week on CBS. While those closely involved with the case generally agree that Wambaugh—who also wrote the screenplay—was true to his subject and captured the story's sad essence, this isn't to say that his version of the events is without some disturbing flaws.

Bradfield is the central figure in both the book and the miniseries. This is due at least in part to the

**A bizarre 1979 multiple murder still haunts a 'crushingly normal' Philadelphia suburb.**

fact that he, unlike the loner Smith, had a small coterie of very close friends (most also colleagues) with whom he shared many of his secrets. Ultimately, it was only through the testimony of these friends that much of the story of the events leading up to the murders ever emerged. Among the secrets was the story Bradfield detailed for months preceding the killings: he warned his friends that Smith was planning to murder Susan Reinert. He not only described for them some of the gruesome means Smith intended to use; he demonstrated them. He showed them, for example, Smith's methods for quickly chaining a person and for devising a gun silencer from a car's oil filter. He claimed to assume responsibility for safeguarding Reinert. It was too dangerous to call the police, he said—Smith had contacts on the force.

Bradfield told his friends that he and Reinert were not lovers, but

claimed that the quiet, shy woman had started experimenting in kinky sex with strange men. He described her as a desperate, needy woman to whom he offered guidance. He also offered the improbable tale that he was made sole beneficiary of her will and life insurance (to the tune of \$730,000) against his wishes, as part of her fantasy that they were lovers.

It's very easy to ask why a group of intelligent, well-educated people were so taken in by Bradfield that they failed to act on the news that a murder was being planned; why didn't they warn her or call the state police, if the Upper Merion cops couldn't be trusted? Such questions are usually asked by people who didn't know the teacher. Vince Valaitis, one of Bradfield's confidantes and still a teacher at Upper Merion, feels that most accounts of the crime have failed to portray Bradfield's unique personal charm: "He could be quite

normal, fun and a *fascinating* person." It's not the kind of attraction that comes across on television; one would probably have to meet him in person.

**Preying on the vulnerable:** Bradfield sought out those who were emotionally vulnerable and thus very receptive to the attention of a seemingly warm, caring and wise man. His inner circle's trust in him was complete—as Reinert's had been. While this group was not a "cult" per se, as some early news reports branded it, it did have elements of a cult of personality.

In a rather unexciting environment, this one man presented himself as a deep thinker willing to share himself and his thoughts freely with a few he deemed worthy. To the socially somewhat stifled people he befriended, his was heady company. As Valaitis puts it, "I was indeed duped by him, and a lot of other people were, too."

In contrast to the charming Bradfield stands Jay C. Smith. With the knowledge of hindsight it's apparent that Smith, rather than being the opposite of Bradfield, was his complement. Bradfield had the most mercenary purposes for murdering the Reinerts, but probably lacked the will, on his own, to carry out the crime. Smith, on the other hand, seemed to view killing as a hobby. He made a study of methods of murder and was deeply interested in the area of forensic science; by learning more and more about the latter, he found ways to murder without being caught. The fact that it took seven years to convict Smith is testimony to his erudition in this field.

The depiction of Jay C. Smith in the miniseries is especially weak. While Robert Loggia's portrayal of Smith does show the educator and Army Reserve colonel to be weird and mysterious, as Smith was, it does not allow the viewer to see those aspects of his persona that caused so many in the school and the township to dismiss his eccentricities with a laugh and a wave of the hand.

When he first came to Upper Merion in the late '60s, and for a few years after that, Smith enjoyed running a "tight ship" around the school—with strict sanctions against cutting class, smoking and other common student infractions. During this same time, there was considerable turnover at the upper levels of the school district's administration, which helped to prevent anyone from keeping tabs on him and his behavior.

**Rumors rampant:** As is common in high schools everywhere, rumors about the principal proliferated. But these tales were not the usual fare. One common story went that Smith had been caught shop-

Continued on page 21



## Miami

By Joan Didion  
Simon & Schuster, 238 pp., \$17.95

By Paul Skenazy

# Southern discomfort and Didion's Miami virtues

**A**S THE GLITZY MIAMI VICE STYLISHLY droops in its ratings, Miami's image is being remade by journalists. First there was the hyperbolic enthusiasm of T.D. Allman's *Miami: City of the Future*, then David Rieff's more sober and thoughtful, less colorful and more leisurely *Going to Miami: Exiles, Tourists and Refugees in the New America*.

Now there is Joan Didion's report, which maps already familiar ground but with a sense of geography all her own. Not quite a tourist, not quite a novelist, not quite a reporter, Didion doesn't so much explore a subject—San Francisco in the '60s, shopping malls, irrigation systems, migraine headaches—as devour it with her prose. She has a nose for madness, and our manic century plays to her strengths. She likes landscapes where the commonplace has turned surreal, distorted, ghostly—borderlands where one precipitously balances at the frontiers that divide nations, states of mind, land and ocean, decades.

Her prescience has lately led her from Los Angeles to the Caribbean, first in *Salvador*, now in *Miami*, which she describes as "not exactly an American city as American cities until recently have been understood but a tropical capital: long on rumor, short on memory, overbuilt on the chimera of runaway money." She wants to portray how "Havana vanities come to dust in Miami," and to insist that Miami itself is "not a city at all but a tale, a romance of the tropics, a kind of waking dream."

**All the city's a stage:** Didion convincingly turns Miami into a phantasmagoric territory of political intrigue and melodrama. Life itself has never been quite enough for Didion, and it is her ability to make tragedy, and conspiracy, of adventurism that gives this book its absorbing narrative line. She begins in a graveyard with the tombstones of deposed Cuban leaders. Her Florida is the part of Cuba's "stage" where "declamatory exits are made," where "the chorus waits," where the "continuing opera" of exile is enacted—where life is a performance, characters speak their "curtain lines," courtrooms are "puppet theater."

Didion's fascination with Miami has to do with the bone-to-muscle intimacy of wealth and poverty, Cuban and Anglo, and black and white, that she finds there. She describes a place where you drive from "walled enclaves to utter desolation while changing stations on the car radio," and reminds us of the essential historical landmarks

of this multicultural quagmire: the 1961 debacle at the Bay of Pigs when a force of Cuban exiles failed in its effort to overthrow Castro's government, the 125,000 Mariel ref-

## JOURNALISM

ugees who came in 1980, the even more recent boatloads of Haitians, and the 1980 riots after a black motorcyclist was brutally beaten and the policemen involved were acquitted.

Her key point about Miami as a metropolis is that the connective tissue is missing, and its multiple populations live ignorant of one another, imposing false assumptions on their neighbors. Anglos, for example, don't realize that the Cubans who make up more than half the city's population are not interested in assimilation into American life, but see themselves as exiles. Their spirits are haunted, and their days dominated, by relations to an island 90 miles away that many have never visited and others haven't seen for almost 30 years.

**Facing south:** It is this focus on a Miami that perpetually faces south that most distinguishes Didion's portrait from Allman's and Rieff's. Didion dissects each particle of the experience of exile, turning it every which way under the magnifying gaze of her curiosity. She recreates Miami as the playground of the "low and lurid": a landscape of criminality, subversion and violence that belies governmental pieties about a Latin American policy.

She mocks the "special lens" of Washington propaganda that tries to see the exiles as a "tribute to the American system." She angrily parades the facts behind the speeches of president after president, suggests how the exiles' hopes have been used and abused, and demonstrates the way public proclamations maintain an imaginary world wholly antithetical to Cuban ideals. She writes of how the CIA trained exiles in the '60s, what Watergate had to do with anti-Castro sentiments and how Cubans have been deployed as Nicaraguan "freedom fighters."

Didion's revelations have less to do with new information than with her skill at assembling what we all might have known or guessed, had we cared. Following her mind through its tangled associations and observations, we stumble over knotty possibilities and connections until we feel a little of the paranoia that dominates the inter-

nal life of the Cuban exile community, where minute shifts of alliance cost lives—where bombs explode in cars, people are gunned down in the streets, and killers are lionized for their bravery and principles. We quickly give up our illusions about the Cubans as simply anti-communists, or simply right-wing fanatics—as "simply" anything.

**Truth in details:** What Didion does best, then, is complicate our thinking. She manages to create pattern on pattern from whatever she runs up against. She discovers Anglo indifference, for example, in the low attendance at a college course on Cuban exiles, and the absence of Cuban menus from the food section of the paper. She recognizes the incompatibility of Anglo and Cuban concepts even when the words seem the same. She finds cultural significance in the inordinate number of shoe stores and the stacked heels they display, the unfashionably low necklines of dresses, the unseasonable taste for black clothing among women.

The big events of history count for Didion only insofar as people have interpreted them to create sustaining myths. The fact of the invasion of Cuba doesn't matter, but the fact that it is still com-

memorated 25 years later does, and that Cuban leaders describe the American government's "betrayal" of their cause with a passion undulled by time.

Much is lost, or distorted, by Didion's fascination with the violent, extravagant and sleazy. Daily life, for example—the street life, the sense of how the local grocer copes with children and prices, the way the political idealism is absorbed into or ignored during lunch talk. Although Didion is great at giving consequence to the microscopic, she is prone to overgeneralize: the Cuban temperament is "absolutist, and sacrificial, on the Spanish model." Her writing can be heavy-handed, and you feel bludgeoned at times by her irony.

Her effort to make high opera of Cuban life also seems to have infected her already baroque style.

**For Didion, Miami is "not a city at all but a tale, a romance of the tropics, a kind of waking dream."**

Sentences will sometimes go on for half a page. She breaks her ideas up in the middle, piling one subordinate thought on another while the point of it all waits in syntactic limbo. The prose takes on a stut-tery, swollen feel, as if overburdened, overripe, about to burst.

But in many ways this is Didion's finest book. She's always been a stronger essayist than novelist, because the journalist's angle provides just the right resistance to her narcissism and pretensions while her neurotic attention to ignored details helps us reacquaint ourselves with the crabbed circumstances of our world. She has learned some hard lessons about her own ethnocentrism since *Salvador*, and so is able to reveal the very illusions dominating Anglo condescension that many accused her of in the earlier book. She writes both with the skeptic's meanness and the insider's sympathy.

What you come away with is not so much a place as a story—a kind of tour of Purgatory orchestrated by Wagner. You don't believe that Didion has given you Miami, but that she has let you peep through the keyhole at her trysts with the city, let you into the mysteries one woman finds and imagines in the shadows cast by a town's devotion to a world long gone, save as memory and hope.

Paul Skenazy teaches American studies and literature at the University of California-Santa Cruz, and regularly reviews fiction for the *San Francisco Chronicle*.







Artist Vito Acconci sits in his *Garden Chair* (1986): furnishing interior spaces with new meaning.

## Vito Acconci's frontiers of inner space

### Domestic Trappings

Vito Acconci  
Neuberger Museum, Purchase, N.Y.

By David Lee

**A**S THE MIND-EXPANDING '60S came to a close, there seems to have been a certain feeling of anxiety among Americans—at least as transmitted by the collective consciousness of the media. Maybe after exploring the moon and discovering the vast cosmos of their own inner space, people were beginning to feel a bit small. Daunting new frontiers of human potential had opened on a wild west of the imagination.

These uncharted regions were explored by means of unorthodox religions, encounter groups, communes, drugs, media heroes and, of course, art. Still, along this horizon of inner possibilities, anybody who was old enough—or young enough—to have claimed possession of their own "space" was probably at least peripherally influenced by the art of Vito Acconci. He was like a media poltergeist. His art was himself. One might say he is the pioneer of perspective, but in contrast to the Renaissance window on the world, Acconci's perspective lines find their vanishing

point within.

Acconci had been a poet after he graduated from college in 1964. He met with the Saint Mark's group of writers and for a short time published his own poetry journal, *O To 9*. It was a time of great interdisciplinary openness and by 1968 he was looking for ways to expand the limits of the page. He created

### ART

poetry events, then actions documented with a camera. The first were very simple and still word-related; for example, a series of jumps, taking a photograph each time as he landed (*Jumps*, 1969). They were not photographs of an event, but rather *through* it.

Along with a text, they were meant to report the simple facts of the occurrence. From there the work became more confrontational, as Acconci tested his space against others'. In *Room Situation (A Situation Using Room)* (1970), he commandeered the space of the Gain Ground Gallery in New York by having a portion of his belongings relocated there, moving some of his life into a public space. In *Proximity Piece*, the same year, he accosted visitors to the Jewish Museum by standing uncomfortably close to them until they moved away or told him to leave.

He began to use his own body as territory on which to perform, creating some of his most notorious works. For *Rubbing Piece* (1970) he rubbed away the skin of one arm with his other hand. In *Trademarks* (1970) he made bite marks all over his body. And he lurked under a raised floor in the Sonnabend Gallery and used the sounds of people walking overhead for sexual arousal in a piece called *Seedbed* (1972): "I function as a 'floor' for viewers—using viewers to excite me—using my excitement to connect with viewers."

**Shock treatment:** While one could not help but appreciate the concepts of private space and public activity that such events forced, much of this was undeniably shocking, even when encountered after the fact in the pages of art journals. Yet Acconci had simply realized that the real awesome new power of the age of Aquarius was the media itself. No longer an entity dispensed from a few central locations, the media became a ubiquitous system by which information (relevant and non-) is produced and consumed.

He writes of his pieces: "The action was done not as a private activity (there was no notation of my interpretations, my feelings, my subjective experience) but as an

exemplar, a model (there was the listing of facts). The action was done, then, from the beginning, so that it could be turned into reportage, into rumor: the action that started with a word (diagram-sentence) was done only to return to words (small talk).

"This is 'performance' only in the sense of: 'the act or process of carrying out something, the execution

### Acconci taps into the mythology of seeing familiar things become strange.

of an action.' The appropriate medium, then, is that which packages, summarizes achievement—magazines, news media."

**An Acconci "hello":** At the opening of his retrospective at the Neuberger Museum in Purchase, N.Y., (40 minutes from Manhattan) on Sept. 27, Acconci gave a slide show. In his familiar conscriptive-looking jacket and dark jeans, he marched the audience through a concise history of his artistic involvement, concluding a discussion of the early work by saying,

"With this work I was trying to make a joining of artist and audience. In retrospect, I think what I was trying to do was make a very simple kind of 'hello.'"

During the '70s, however, he looked for ways of removing his physical presence from the work: "I think that by concentrating on myself, I was closing the viewer off; intimate space was escapist space." He accomplished this transference through pieces that required the viewer literally to step into the spotlight—to become a component and accept for the time being his premise. But Acconci's presence was never far away—in the form of a taped voice or image.

*Under-History Lessons* (1976) is one of the larger pieces reassembled for the Neuberger show. It consists of an approximately 15 foot square room filled with rows of very low tables and children's stools and with a single entrance. Bare lightbulbs are suspended from the ceiling almost touching the floor, lighting the underside of the tables. The bulbs swing gently and shadows on the walls rise and fall like an unsettled sea. The tables and stools are contained within a knee-high wall of cinder blocks with only a narrow passage between it and the outside wall. People come in through the single entrance, climb over the cinderblocks and sit at one of the stools. They hear an audio tape of Acconci as teacher prompting: "Let's feel oppression!" and a classroom of Acconci as students responding: "W-e-e-e f-e-e-l!"

Teacher: "A-gain!"

Students: "W-e-e-e f-e-e-l!"

Teacher: "Re-peat!"

And so on. The lessons continue in a mantra-like rhythmic repetition: "Let's hate!" "Let's not spoil the party!" "Let's believe we're in this together!" This is a chorus of possible responses to situations that seem to leave no way out. They are also the remedial survival lessons for a class of people that feels trapped; a class for whom the more noble lessons of human achievement are unattainable.

**Audience participation:** Throughout its various manifestations, Acconci's work is filled with this kind of polemicism. Political analysis, psychoanalysis and social science appear in broad terminologies as they might be described by the headlines of a newspaper. He turns controversial issues into another kind of reportage concerned not with nuance but rather label. The work makes no attempt to endorse policy; it forces viewers to ask that of themselves. Viewer participation is essential to complete each piece.

This retrospective, which will travel to Aspen, Colo., and St. Louis, Mo., after its New York engagement, was organized by the La Jolla (Calif.) Museum of Contemporary Art's chief curator, Ronald J.



Onorato. The show includes examples from throughout Acconci's career but emphasizes his work since 1980. The title, "Domestic Trappings," relates to Acconci's recent exploration of living spaces and the furnishings that make them comfortable. The title is also a pun—a reminder that houses are not always homes and comfort not necessarily freedom. Imagine an adult version of Pee-wee's Playhouse, with an unmistakably malevolent edge.

Acconci's *Overstuffed Chair* (1987) is a large living room chair covered with concrete. Three small stools appear to be sinking, gradually succumbing to the chair's gravitational pull. Acconci's choices of materials for these pieces show his clear and precise sense of associative properties.

Like the film *The Incredible Shrinking Man*, Acconci's work taps into the mythology of seeing intimately familiar things become strange. A ladder becomes a chaise lounge, garbage cans turn into a chair. They are like puns, with two different, often paradoxical definitions suggesting life in a society that is acquisitive and transient, crowded and lonely, egalitarian and class restrictive.

One piece that is not in the show (but may be included in the Museum of Modern Art's Acconci exhibit of newer work scheduled for this winter in New York), titled *House of Cars*, consists of three cars stacked in what the artist calls an "automobile apartment building." A trunk turns into a chair, one car has a bedroom and little passages to connect them. It is all very cute except for the nagging implications they bring up of a real-world provisional existence.

A good illumination of Acconci's work can be found near the end of the "Domestic Trappings" catalogue. It is a lesson in 11 assign-



*Three Manifestoes* (1981) by Vito Acconci: exploring various windows on the world.

ments that Acconci gave to students at the San Francisco Art Institute in 1983. He asked his students to create a house with no restrictions on material, but he cautions them to think analogically.

The 11 assignments map out the procedure, starting with the roof, and something to hold it up—columns or perhaps just trees. In the second assignment a wall is to be added, and then in the third, three more walls. In the fourth assignment you might decide to put in a window, next a door, and so on,

until the whole house has been created (though not necessarily constructed), furnished and inhabited.

But Acconci makes the process a good deal more complicated than that: a roof, he suggest, might be a hat—something to show off. Walls might be isolation, or shelter, or a billboard. A door might indicate how people are received by the house: "Is the door on the same level as the person who enters—or does the person have to step up or down?" He cautions from the start to "think of this house as a basic

core: something that can be added to or subtracted from or twisted and corrupted through the course. (In other words, there's no turning back now, you're not going to stop here.)"

As a nesting activity, building a house means surrounding oneself with things that make one comfortable and also provide others with an identity. This may change, yet there will be a continuity—the "core" remains. Acconci encourages his students to consider what their actions mean in terms of sur-

vival, personal comfort and public—or social—relevance. Again, he avoids making recommendations. He concerns himself with the process whereby one decides what is important, whether dictated by personal capacity or social circumstances. Acconci urges a continual evaluation of what is perceived as freedom and limitation without distilling fantasy and fact. You make your own space and you live in it.

David Lee is a New York-based art critic.

## Murders

Continued from page 18

lifting steaks in an area supermarket. Smith's extremely aloof manner made it easy for students to start strange rumors—there were so few facts for them to go on. His habit of making odd or shocking statements in an off-the-cuff manner only added to the mystery.

Smith's aloofness also made it possible for many to dismiss his strange mannerisms as meaningless. Even on the rare occasions when Smith would interact directly with students, as my brother, Bill Travers, Upper Merion class of '70, remembers, "his eyes would look right through you like you weren't even there." It's an eerie characteristic that shows up even in Smith's photographs, but it's one probably no actor could reproduce. Smith was not perceived as the hissing, militaristic authoritarian we see on TV; he was seen as an oddball, but few feared him.

As the '70s grew older, Smith

grew weirder. He now refrained for the most part from wearing his Army Reserve uniform to school, but it was rumored that he'd been seen sitting in his office in his underwear and in the nude. He disappeared for hours, days and weeks at a time. Many teachers felt they hardly knew the man, even after a few years at Upper Merion. But many had also heard stories that Smith was a mafia hit man and that he knew where Jimmy Hoffa was buried.

### From strange to dangerous:

In 1978 Smith was arrested on drug, weapons and robbery charges (a story in itself). A police search of his home turned up various illegal drugs and weapons, as well as acid stolen from the high school lab (which Smith at other times had mentioned could be used to dissolve bodies). Police also uncovered an extensive pornography collection; later, raunchy letters to a woman with whom he carried on a sexual affair surfaced. The combination of the lurid findings in

Smith's basement and the discovery of Bradfield's closed circle of friends prompted press speculation about satanic cults and sexual rituals in Upper Merion. The fact that a dildo had been found in the front seat of Susan Reinert's car at the time her corpse was discovered only added fuel to the fire.

While Wambaugh's book was better able to give the audience a sense of Smith's truly bizarre nature, it too falls short. And it is a major point: if people had not become so inured to accounts of Smith's weird behavior he might well never have gotten the opportunity to murder the Reinerts. Pat Schnure, a teacher at Upper Merion and close friend of Susan Reinert, remembers Smith as "the strangest man that ever was." She adds, "When you said 'strange,' you didn't think 'criminal.'"

Perhaps because she was not teaching at the Senior High in the period leading up to the killings, Schnure never heard the rumors of Smith's plans. She is sure that she

would have informed her friend about them had she been aware, but herself admits that, in the face of the many outrageous things heard about Smith, it might have been difficult to take this story completely seriously.

Valaitis concurs: Smith did have that habit of making outrageous statements to teachers just to observe their response and confound them a bit. When Bradfield detailed Smith's murder plans, Valaitis says his response was, "Bill, don't you think he's making these things up to see how you'll react?" While conceding he may have been naive, Valaitis says, "You kind of assume that higher authorities would act if it were serious."

The aftermath of the Reinert murders is clear for the victims and the perpetrators of the crime, but less so for Upper Merion and for those whose lives were closely touched by the events. Valaitis, Schnure and Upper Merion graduates I spoke with agree that Upper Merion—both school and

township—is basically sound and calm now. After all, Valaitis points out, "this is a murder that occurred between a principal, Bradfield and some friends," involving "these people and their private lives, not the whole school district." Schnure believes that while much of what passed in the past several years "has been painful," in the end, "the English department at least has drawn closer."

After his disillusionment with Bradfield, a man he respected and trusted, Valaitis declares: "I will never trust anyone again, that way." While trust is important in all human relationships, clearly these events demonstrate the need for a little wariness. Many in Upper Merion discounted the strange stories they heard coming out of the high school by pointing to the quality of education it offered. Perhaps the final lesson of the Upper Merion tragedy is that a good education should teach students to challenge not just assumptions about truth, but about falsehood as well.



## Tibet

Continued from page 13

tions." But the Senate vote, an amendment to a State Department authorization bill, questioned the latter assertion and blamed the Chinese for the trouble. Several days later a State Department spokesperson said the department is reassessing its policy toward Beijing's handling of the Tibetan situation. But cultural genocide remains very real to Tibetans. Even today refugees continue to leave Tibet. Often families send their young to attend the well-run schools of the exile communities. Exiles have returned to visit, and China's opening of Tibet to tourism several years ago has inevitably brought in outside influence.

Once-banned traditional music and arts have slowly been revived, including the spectacular New Year's parade. But critics maintain "traditional" music in Tibet today in fact

reflects more Chinese elements than Tibetan—another indication of subtle assimilation.

**Semi-permanent exile:** These are not the only problems facing the exile communities, now scattered throughout India and in some other countries. More than two-thirds of the exiles were born outside of Tibet; with the passage of time, a community's cultural bonds inevitably weaken.

Differences also exist as to how the Chinese should be pressured to change. Younger Tibetans question what they see as inaction on the part of exile leaders based in Dharamsala, a small hill town in north India now home to the Dalai Lama.

"If not for His Holiness the Dalai Lama the exile communities would fall apart," says a young Tibetan. "We cannot continue just assisting ourselves here on the outside. If we don't pressure China, in 10 years it will be all over. Our culture is dying. We'll never go back." □

William Gasperini recently travelled to Tibet.

## Sustained passion

Continued from page 24

with everything that Don Leandro was telling me. I wanted to embrace him, to kiss him; and not just because they were going to give me food, and were not going to back out on me but were going to protect me. Because, through him, I had recovered my own history, the tradition, the essence of Nicaragua. I had found my genesis, my antecedents; I felt myself a continuation, concrete and uninterrupted.... I was rooted in the earth, attached to the soil, to history. I felt invincible."

That subjective sense of power never gets transferred to the screen, although much of the concrete information in such an encounter does.

**Skirting debate:** *Fire from the Mountain* was clearly not meant as an exploration of Omar Cabezas' personal drama, however. It builds on Cabezas' story to make an argu-

ment to Americans about the intense drama and commitment of people in a hands-on experience of revolution. But what's missing in that endeavor is an engagement with the national foreign policy debate, as framed by the mainstream media that informs it.

The film skirts widespread reports of exhaustion and cynicism in the general populace with *Sandinismo* as government—reports which, whatever their origin and validity, inform the current debate. It effectively dismisses the issue by showing an upbeat picture of cross-class support, a picture the editor controls and is hard to take at face value unless you are already predisposed to agree. It never touches the inflammatory issues of media control and expropriation. Its opening scene of a military commander exhorting coffee-pickers tends to reinforce rather than dismiss arguments that Sandinistas draw support from disaffection to the contras rather than from their programs.

In short, *Fire from the Mountain* works powerfully for those who are supporters of the Nicaraguan revolution. It doesn't extend its argument to those whose primary source of information is the evening TV news. It alludes to, but never captures, the earthy poetry of Omar Cabezas, the scruffy kid who ended up in national government.

Cabezas' book will endure, because of the power of his personal voice in a situation that crosses the boundaries of time and place. The movie sits uncomfortably on the edge between topicality and universality, and between exhortation and description. *Fire on the Mountain*, the movie, is a rolling example of the Balkanized state of debate about foreign policy and Nicaragua. ■

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# "The religious Left is the only Left we've got." — *The Nation*

Writing in a recent issue of *The Nation*, Michael Ferber argues that in periods such as ours, when the secular Left is defeated or dejected, it is religious people who keep progressive social ideals alive. Currently, Ferber estimates, "of every five people actively working for progressive causes, at least three draw energy and conviction from their religious beliefs."

According to Ferber, religious people are wrestling with transcendent questions progressives need to debate (but often evade): What is the *good* society? Are there means to get there that don't spoil the ends? How do we summon the courage to act, especially when many are disheartened and action involves sacrifice? Moreover, lest the current religious revival be surrendered to the political Right, "it is our task to talk values, to talk ideals, to talk transcendence," says Ferber.

We at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW (an ecumenical monthly edited by lay Catholics) agree wholeheartedly. We are particularly interested in exploring religious commitments that result in progressive social consequences, as exemplified by such giants as Dorothy Day, Archbishop Tutu, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Lech Walesa, Martin Luther King Jr., Thomas Merton, Cesar Chavez, and Archbishop Romero.

We are fascinated by the challenge religious activists have been posing to poverty, plant closings, apartheid, nuclear weapons, the arms race, and U.S. belligerence in Central America.

We are amused that a high-ranking general

stated at the National War College that "the greatest challenge to all that we do now comes from within the churches," and that White House operative Patrick Buchanan complained that religious activists "have helped energize the Left to an extent that it has not been energized since the Vietnam War."

We are gladdened by the way the Catholic bishops have, in their pastoral letters, placed economic democracy on the national agenda and nuclear disarmament on the nation's conscience.

But we are dismayed that few on the conventional Left are aware of what religious people are doing and saying. If, as Ferber says, the religious Left is the only real Left there is, it behooves progressives of all persuasions to inquire into the sources of resilience, energy, and social passion found among religious progressives.

We believe the secular Left needs the religious Left as never before. Those who write for us include diverse people like Robert N. Bellah, Christopher Lasch, J.M. Cameron, Eileen Egan, Henri J.M. Nouwen, John C. Cort, Norman Lear, Robert Coles, Juli Loesch, Richard J. Mouw, and Gordon C. Zahn. We bat around the full range of theological, ethical, and social issues, and defy easy pigeonholing. *Newsweek* has called us "thoughtful and often cheeky," Martin E. Marty finds us "lively," and the *Library Journal* has predicted we will "doubtless command increasing attention." If you think it's time to end the isolation of the secular Left from the religious Left, subscribe today!

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Peace Studies at the Crossroads, a major national conference, will be held at the Park East Hotel in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, from November 12-15, featuring keynote addresses by Chad Alger,

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**November 12**  
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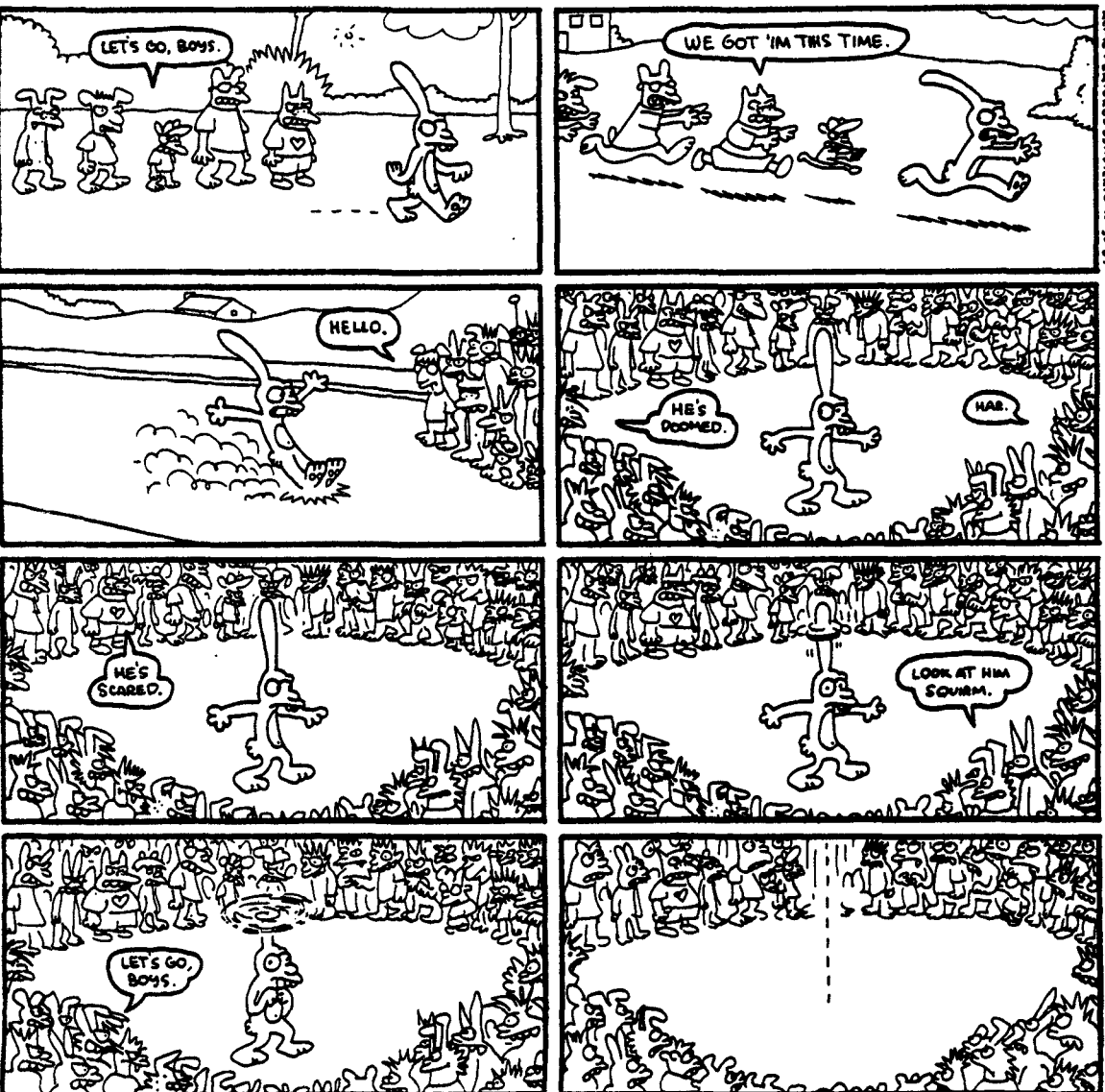
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## LIFE IN HELL

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**Fire from the Mountain**  
Directed by Deborah Shaffer  
Distributed by First Run Features

By Pat Aufderheide

**T**HE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF SANDINISTA REVOLUTIONARY Omar Cabezas became an instant classic when it was published in English in 1985, not only for its insight into the Nicaraguan revolution, but because, with punch and poetry, Cabezas communicated how people anywhere are moved to political commitment, and what inspires them as they pursue their dream.

For instance, he talks about the moment when, a skinny student from a dusty *barrio*, he joined the anti-Somoza front. "It was like being a little boy when they take you to school for the first time; it was as if that very day marked the end of your childhood happiness. Because you have to become responsible. Something like that happens when you join the *Frente*, but on another level, less to do with happiness. Because if you are serious and if, as Che said, the organization you are joining is a revolutionary organization, and the revolution is real revolution, then you're in to stay—until victory or death. Once you join, and as your work and responsibilities multiply, it's like entering a whirlwind. Inside a spiral, right? Because isn't a spiral just a series of revolutions in an evolutionary sense? And you're in to the hilt—you're totally screwed!—and glad of it."

In that quote you have Omar Cabezas—down home, boyish, determined, completely caught up in the spiral. His personal narration (it's an as-told-to book, a transcription of tapes) tells you plenty about the work of holding together a small organization with toothpicks and faith; about what in that faith caught fire among Nicaraguan working people; and about the personal terrors—the loneliness, the illness, the moments when supporters didn't come through—of working as a guerrilla. It deliberately doesn't tell you some things, too, including the core work of the mountain campaigners.

Deborah Shaffer, a longtime New Leftist, the maker of independent films (*The Wobblies* and the Oscar-nominated *Witness to War*) and editor of many others on Central America made both independently and for network television, has made an hour-long film based on Cabezas' narrative, also called *Fire from the Mountain* (distributed through First Run Features in New York). Although interviews with Cabezas thread through the film, it's much more of a short essay on the determination of Nicaraguan people to maintain the gains of the Sandinista revolution.

Shaffer draws on now-deep archives of Nicaraguan footage to retell and frame Cabezas' story, with photos of Sandino himself, footage borrowed from earlier films that

Omar Cabezas' fiery  
autobiography  
informs a  
sympathetic film  
portrait of  
Nicaragua's  
revolution.

# SMOLDERING PASSIONS

captured life in guerrilla camps, urban devastation after the final bombings by Somoza, and news footage from the day of Sandinista victory. She also interviews people mentioned by Cabezas in the book, as well as a fellow-guerrilla and an urban supporter.

Frequently, the points Cabezas makes are illustrated by images of daily life in Nicaragua, including many shots of kids at play and women at work. Man-and-woman-on-the-street interviews testify to support for a home-made revolution, and drive home the argument made at the outset by a military commander, who tells volunteer cotton pickers that they're working to undo the damage done by the contra war.

**Beyond reporting:** "This film is more metaphysical than the other movies I've made," Shaffer told *Cineaste* magazine recently. "It's not strictly about the war, the contras or any other issue; you could say it's more like an art film."

But although the film is not a public affairs essay, it is a documentary that looks both didactic and familiar, partly because its borrowed footage evokes so many other films on Nicaragua over the last seven years.

Its theme is simple: the Nicaraguan revolution was a process that inspired and involved an entire country, and which continues in the face of U.S. attack. Its execution is clean and clear, its dramatizing visuals constantly pushing the story from Cabezas himself to the society around him.

And yet there's something missing.

To focus on the personal, which is the compelling power of the book, what's missing is the funky lyricism of Omar Cabezas. He expertly steers readers around questions of guerrilla tactics and strategy with tales of personal incompetence, idiosyncracies of organizing, and the passion of a young man who found something to believe in. In filmed interviews, Cabezas nowadays wears the look of a man oppressed by the limits of the possible, and one of his most moving moments is when he tells the interviewer that he had no idea everything "would be so hard."

Passages from the book are used as narration, floating over scenes that chronicle, but were never meant to capture the subjective sense of the moment. Scenes that reveal the conditions under which Cabezas grew up provide a vivid sense of what it's like to try to run a household without running water, but they aren't seen from the viewpoint of a boy growing up there.

The filmmaker interviews a leathery-faced peasant who promised his sons to Cabezas. Hearing his story tells you much about the grass-roots force of *Sandinismo* (and something as well about patriarchy). The book tells you as well about the meaning for the guerrilla of Cabezas' encounter with the living past, when he met a peasant who dedicated his future, his sons, to the revolution:

"I felt I really was his son, the son of Sandino, the son of history," writes Cabezas. "I understood my own past; I knew where I stood; I had a country, a historical identity,

Continued on page 23

